THE IMPETUS BEHIND THE CREATION OF THE UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the US Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Military History

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2005

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*	**2. REPORT TYPE**	**3. DATES COVERED** *(From - To)*
17-06-2005	Master's Thesis	OCT 1775 – AUG 1916

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

The Impetus Behind the Creation of the United States Naval Reserve

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)

Commander Daniel F. Goergen, United States Navy Reserve

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD
1 Reynolds Ave.
Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

The United States Naval Reserve provides the United States Navy a ready pool of trained personnel as an augmentation force to the active duty manning. In the 230 year history of the Navy the Naval Reserve has only been organized for the last 90 years. This paper examines the history of the Navy identifying key elements within the U.S. that lead to the authorization of the Naval Reserve in 1916. It will examine the political, economic, and strategic environment between 1775 and 1916. Looking at the strategic mission of the Navy and how it changed during that time to require a ready reserve. The experiences of the naval leaders over the course of time identified and developed the theory for the professional naval force to include a viable reserve force. The gradual recognition of the changing and expanding role of the Navy after the Industrial Revolution, the culmination of America's Manifest Destiny and the development of a strategic naval policy, along with overseas territorial expansion all provided impetus in the social and political arena that led to the authorization of the U.S. Naval Reserve. The USNR continues to provide valuable support to the Navy. Both are continuing to transform to maintain the relevance between the forces.

15. SUBJECT TERMS

Naval Reserve, Navy, Transformation, Strategic, Contributory Support, Change

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**			**19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)*
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	UU	103	

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE IMPETUS BEHIND THE CREATION OF THE UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE, by CDR Daniel F. Goergen, 95 pages.

The United States Naval Reserve (USNR) provides the United States Navy a ready pool of trained personnel as an augmentation force to the active duty manning. In the 230-year history of the Navy the Naval Reserve has only been organized for the last 90 years. This paper examines the history of the Navy identifying key elements within the US that lead to the authorization of the Naval Reserve in 1916. It will examine the political, economic, and strategic environment between 1775 and 1916 and will look at the strategic mission of the Navy and how it changed during that time to require a ready reserve. The experiences of the naval leaders over the course of time identified and developed the theory for the professional naval force to include a viable reserve force. The gradual recognition of the changing and expanding role of the Navy after the Industrial Revolution, the culmination of America's Manifest Destiny, and the development of a strategic naval policy, along with overseas territorial expansion all provided impetus in the social and political arena that led to the authorization of the US Naval Reserve. The USNR continues to provide valuable support to the Navy. Both are continuing to transform to maintain the relevance between the forces.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Foremost, I wish to thank my wife for allowing me the time to work on this paper and the long hours taking our children to their various events without me. I thank my children for putting up with their father's absence if not physically, mentally. All my instructors for encouraging the completion of this project, especially Mr. John Kuehn, my committee chair, CDR Daniel Honken, and Dr. Donald Wright for listening to my complaints but continuing to provide support.

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ACRONYMS

CAPT	Captain United States Navy
CDR	Commander United States Navy
LT	Lieutenant United State Navy
CFFC	Commander Fleet Forces Command
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
COMM	Commodore United States Navy
CSA	Confederate States of America
NR	Naval Reserve
RADM	Rear Admiral
SECNAV	Secretary of the Navy
SLOC	Sea Lanes of Communication
US	United States
USN	United States Navy
USNR	United States Naval Reserve
VADM	Vice Admiral

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States Navy and the Naval Reserve

An Act of Congress established the United States Naval Reserve (USNR) on 29 August 1916, yet the United States Navy (USN) had existed for over 140 years without benefit of an authorized reserve arm. During those years the Navy was active throughout the world, fighting Barbary Pirates in Tripoli, the French, British, Mexicans, Confederate States of America, and Spanish. In each case the American Navy was victorious. Given that success, what factors convinced the Navy that a naval reserve was necessary in 1916 and not before?

The Navy has a long tradition of aspiring to be the finest and most effective naval fighting force in the world. It achieved this goal in the first half of the twentieth century. In the Navy's first century it remained a relatively small professional force supporting American maritime commerce around the world. When called to war it used its professional nucleus to rapidly expand with trained seamen from the US merchant marine and by authorizing privateers to meet the emergency. As soon as the crises ended the Navy would again be reduced to the bare minimum required to meet Congresses' Constitutional obligation: "To provide and maintain a Navy."[1] The experiences of the naval leaders over the course of time identified and developed the theory for a naval force to include a viable reserve force. The gradual recognition of the expanding role of the Navy after the Industrial Revolution, the development of a strategic naval goal, and the end of Manifest Destiny leading to overseas expansion all provided the impetus in the social and political arena that led to the authorization of the Naval Reserve.

The US needed a strong navy to protect US maritime shipping industry because without it maritime commerce was subject to seizure by the British, French, and other seagoing powers. The only safe way to transport goods would be in the holds of foreign shipping. The US Senate Committee on Naval affairs fully understood the importance of the relationship between a navy and maritime commerce when they stated in 1887, "The history of the world attests the fact that the growth of the commerce of any given country goes hand in hand with the ability of that country to afford protection thereto. Therefore, if any country enlists or should enlist in foreign or sea-going commerce, it must have a navy to protect the men and all the agencies that enter therein. This can only be done by a navy equal to the necessities and volume of such commerce."[2]

A navy was required to protect a country's commerce on the seas and a strong merchant marine helps to maintain a navy. A strong merchant marine was considered the Navy's training ground for young sailors. The pool of trained seamen came from within the merchant marine and fishing industries in both peace and war. This idea became the crux of the argument that a navy in a maritime society could always find the manpower at the ready as long as it maintained and supplemented its shipping industry.

The United States entered many wars to enforce freedom of navigation for its merchant marine, yet had always maintained only a small active force during peacetime. The United States Congress created the Naval Reserve to bolster the Navy to meet national defense requirements for its interests abroad as well as the defense of home waters. Maintaining a strong active Navy in peace was expensive and the Naval Reserve provided for a pool of personnel, officers and enlisted, to man reserve or auxiliary ships maintained in Navy Department Regions. The Naval Reserve organized by region was

the mechanism that would track the U. S. merchant sailors and those leaving active duty for easy call-up should crisis arise. The focus of this paper will try to uncover the conditions existing in the United States and within the Navy that in 1916 allowed the establishment of the Naval Reserve as a necessary and formal branch of the Navy.

Relevance for the Future

History provides the researcher with parallels that connect the past with the present. The United States Armed Forces are currently undergoing a period of great transformation. Every senior leader is looking at ways the military can change to meet the needs of future warfare. Whether it is with a nation-state competitor or with non-state groups using terror tactics to reach their goals lessons from the past can help us analyze the next generation of warfare. The study of the formation of the Naval Reserve will identify the difficulties encountered with driving change and provide a framework from which to compare the mechanisms for transformation against today's environment. The reader can glean a level of knowledge from the past that can propel them past the formative stages and through study identify those advocates, and agencies that favor innovation and evolution. The Navy and the Administrations they supported from the American Revolution to start of World War I were in a constant debate over how to defend the nation's interests and protect it from invasion. Political and economic environments throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries favored a small-centralized force supported by a strong national militia system.

The Naval Reserve is going through the same transformation that the Navy is encountering today. The Reserves are operating more closely with the Active Force and providing greater peacetime support than ever before. Because of this closer relationship

the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) has directed Commander Fleet Forces Command (CFFC) to conduct a top down review of how the Navy Reserve can better support the Navy.[3] By looking at the creation of the Naval Reserve it may foster a deeper understanding of the historical relationships and the political sensitivities that could encourage or hamper current changes. This thesis' purpose will explore the political and social environment that led to the creation of the Naval Reserve and conclude by drawing important parallels that exist between that past situation and today's operational environment.

Literary Review

Scholars have paid little attention to the evolution of the Naval Reserve. Except for a few documents, the record of the Naval Reserve is within the histories of the Navy itself, the Congressional Record, or in articles by prominent naval thinkers. The works that are specific to the Naval Reserve are broad in nature and do not contain specific analyses of the conditions that led Congress to its creation. This thesis will focus on the events and debates that helped this creation. The bulk of analysis pertains to the period from 1874 to 1916 when most of the debates about the need for a reserve occurred.

In studying this evolution in the naval service the thoughts of many of the leading naval strategists will provide key points of discussion. Review of the works of Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, renowned for his works on navy strategy in the nineteenth century, shows a concern for the direction of the Navy and provides the reader strategies for a global power. The leading naval intellectuals' thoughts on how best to organize and administer a navy capable of defending coastlines as well as project power during global expansion provide insight into the direction of the Navy and its Naval

Reserve. Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, the first president of the Naval War College provides the reader with discussions on a naval reserve, as do many of the active duty officers submitting arguments to the United States Naval Institute *Proceedings* and other prominent professional journals. The succeeding Secretaries of the Navy's put forth the official Navy position on the Naval Reserve in their annual reports to the president and Congress. Speeches from congressmen on the subject of the nature of military forces required for the defense of the country show a depth of support for the development of the Navy, as well as the debates in Congress itself. Reports to the Secretary of the Navy from officers like Captain John Rodgers, the leading naval officer of his time, are also illuminating on how naval strategy develops in the early history of the US. Organizations supporting development of a strong navy, like the Navy League, became popular during the late nineteenth century and through lobbying influence the character of the developing naval service.

The primary sources on the subject of the Naval Reserve are robust and will support the research required for this thesis. However, the published secondary sources on the subject are sparse. The majority of secondary material found came out of the Naval War College compiled by a group of Naval Reserve historians. While detailed they could provide more analysis into the political and social underpinnings of the Naval Reserve formation. These books provide a good chronology and significant survey of the material and give a useful starting point for research. A doctorial thesis presented in 1952 by Harold Thomas Wieand, provides the greatest depth of knowledge on the subject and offers a broader interpretation of the causes for the creation of a naval reserve. The *Congressional Digest, Army and Naval Journal,* and United States Naval Institute

(USNI) *Proceedings* provide a good source of material in the forms of essays by the participants in the events. All of these sources help organize the data and present a clear understanding of the reasons behind the establishment of the Naval Reserve. This thesis will provide an overarching analysis of the events and debates that took place leading up to the creation of the Naval Reserve.

The limitation encountered in researching this work was the lack of documentation available from Navy Department records held at the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C. Additional research in the congressional records concerning hearing notes had they been available in the local area would have rounded out the discussions on the Naval Reserve.

Organization and Layout

In the examination of those factors leading to the creation of the US Naval Reserve an understanding of the overall organization of the Navy is required as well as the political, social, and economic conditions that were prevalent in the United States. To promote a comprehensive analysis of how the Naval Reserve evolved, this work is organized chronologically beginning with the founding of the US. The second chapter examines the ideas of the architects of the American Republic. It will examine the congressional acts that bore upon the creation of a navy and the adoption of using privateers to augment an active navy to fight the War of Independence and then focus on the debates of a fledgling government on the best way to defend the shores and commerce of the US from foreign aggressions. It will show the nature of the threat and the strategic thoughts that fueled the debates. It will bring out that the US's political leaders of the early national period were aware of the difficulties of manning a strong

centralized military in the face of a nation that favored the rights of each state and individual. It will also touch on the economic benefits of having a small standing military and show that Congress and the president held an understanding that a reserve force (militia) could provide national security at a relatively inexpensive cost.

Chapter 3 will cover the lessons learned during the Civil War of how best to organize and maintain a naval force in both peacetime and war. It will discuss the Civil War naval manning policies given the tasks of blockading the Southern States and continuing to protect US interests around the world.

Chapter 4 will explore the US attitude toward a navy as the nation entered its world power phase. The military strategy of the US needed to be able to defend its shores from European powers, specifically the Spanish and to continue to take care of maritime interests abroad. During this period, the US started looking beyond its borders as westward expansion culminated on the North American continent. America, along with the rest of the world, was involved in an emergence of professionalism that led to a birth of a national maritime strategy. It found that the Navy was lacking the type of force to adequately protect the coasts and harbors and meet the national objectives. This chapter will also examine the naval reserve models of the European countries to determine their impact on policy they had on the attitudes of the Navy Department, Congress, and the coastal states' legislators.

Chapter 5 will address the legislation and world events that finally culminated in the creation of the Naval Reserve. The lessons of the Spanish American War, the looming war in Europe, and the naval strategy of the time all contributed to the form that the Naval Reserve would take. The Navy was by no means a formidable force and required

significant buildup to become effective against the European powers. Part of that buildup would be in the form of a naval reserve.

Chapter 6 will provide the conclusion to the research. The research supporting this thesis will examine evidence regarding the motivation to create the Naval Reserve as a required addition to the Navy. Did it fill the need for manpower during a quick expansion in response to crisis? The nature of a navy will be analyzed and conclusions drawn on the realities of evolution's impact on the development of a navy. Financial issues will also be addressed, as well as issues growing out of this study that require further research.

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[1]US Constitution, art. 1, sec 8.

[2]US Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, *Report Number 1987*. 49th Congress, 2d Session, 2 March 1887, 6.

[3]Kimberly Rodgers, Journalist 2nd Class, "Chief of Naval Reserve Gives Perspective on Active Reserve Integration." *Navy News*, 27 May 2004 [journal on-line] available from http://www.news.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=13497; Internet; accessed 5 May 2005.

CHAPTER 2

FOUNDATIONS OF A NAVAL SERVICE

The American Revolution and a New Nation

From the very first days of the nation, men have put to sea to defend the country. During the American Revolution, citizens in the seagoing professions fought for the establishment of the US either as members of the fledgling Navy or as privateers. Knowing that building a navy would be a long process Congress authorized privateers to attack British shipping. On 25 November 1775, Congress authorized attacks on British government vessels by privateers and expanded that authorization to all British shipping by 23 March 1776.[1] Throughout the Revolutionary War privateers played an effective role in commerce raiding capturing or killing 14,000 of the enemy.[2] Because the US had a strong maritime tradition it was assumed by the American leadership that it would be easy either to find willing personnel to join the Navy or to issue Letters of Marque (embarking on *Guerre de Course,* the attack on enemy commerce), thereby expanding the size of the naval service (including privateers) quickly in time of emergency.

It is not surprising that some Americans assumed that sailors and vessels were plentiful because by the late eighteenth century, American sailors traveled the globe, using the skills necessary to sail a ship and defend it from attack. Many masters and owners armed their ships to defend against piracy. The merchant mariner was highly skilled, knowing not only the seaman's craft of winds and seas but also the art of gunnery. Sailors spent their lives at sea to earn their keep, delivering goods around the globe or harvesting the ocean's resources. There was no better training ground for a new Navy. Seaside towns and ports proved a ready source for the manpower the Navy

required during its early years. Ruben Stivers in his book, *Privateers and Volunteers*, sums up this belief.

> Where the militiamen were familiar with basic combat training with the British army or by fighting against the Indians on the frontier, the sailor might have learned combat at sea in a variety of circumstances. He might have fought the pirates against whom all merchant vessels had to contend in the pre-Revolutionary years, or smuggled contraband goods under the noses of British customs agents and the Royal Navy, or fought for Great Britain against the Dutch, Spanish, or French.[3]

The US's first naval heroes came from the merchant marine. John Paul Jones had been a merchant master before becoming an officer in the Navy as had Captain John Barry (of the Brig *Lexington*).[4] Captain Barry while less well known than John Paul Jones was no less important. In his actions with the British he captured no less than nine enemy ships and after the war was appointed to oversee the building of the frigate *United States*.[5] It is of little wonder that the US believed that there would always be a ready supply of US seamen willing and able to enlist in time of war.

The US Militia

After the American Revolution the leaders of the US debated the need for a standing army and navy. The debate generally fell into two camps. Those who favored some form of regular army and navy to be able to respond to any crisis external or internal, and those who distrusted a strong centralized government and a standing force that could impose upon their hard-won freedoms.

The people of the US have always believed that without an identifiable threat that the cost of the military should decrease and be used to more directly benefit the people. Thomas Jefferson, a central member of the debates on the size of the military, summed

up his personal preferences about the size of the US's military in his writings on public income and expenses.

> Young as we are, and with such a country before us to fill with people and happiness, we should point in that direction the whole generative force of nature, wasting none of it in efforts of mutual destruction. It should be our endeavor to cultivate the peace and friendship of every nation, even of that which has injured us most. . . . Our interest will be to throw open the doors of commerce, and to knock off all its shackles, giving perfect freedom to all persons for the vent of whatever they may choose to bring into our ports, and asking the same in theirs.[6]

He was not alone in these thoughts, as seen reflected in the dwindling size of the standing army and navy after the Revolutionary War.

This belief that the militia would be the backbone of America's defense did not sit well with everyone. George Washington was a firm believer that the security of the nation laid in the perceived strength of the military, "If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it; if we desire to secure peace . . . it must be known, that we are at all times ready for war."[7]

The outcome of these debates lead to the Militia Act of 1792. A large standing force was not established and the Militias organized in each state would be the major defense for the nation. The Militia Act of 1792 was the first legislation that laid out a plan on how to define the fighting force of the US It called for, "every free able bodied white male citizen of the respective States, resident therein, who is or shall be of age eighteen years, and under the age of forty-five years (except as is herein after excepted) shall severally and respectively be enrolled in the militia."[8] This act also laid out the limits of presidential powers concerning calling of the militia and under what circumstances he could use them. It accounted for the land armies of the US but made no mention of a navy or navy militia. The act accounted for every able-bodied man to be enrolled

including sailors. It only exempted "mariners actually employed in the sea services of a citizen or merchant of the US"[9] This act in keeping with the general feelings of the nation at peace would enable the country to maintain the very smallest active force. Distance from Europe, where it was believed America's only adversaries were, led to a general feeling of security that did not make it necessary to have a strong standing fighting force. The Atlantic Ocean was protection enough. Official establishment of naval militiamen never occurred because very few believed it necessary since the US was not at war and the US maritime industry was a strong and vital industry, ready for use in time of crisis.

George Washington in his eighth (and last) annual address to Congress took aim at a weak centralized force, specifically calling for a stronger Navy to protect America's interests both at home and abroad.[10] He believed that without a strong military and especially a navy, the European nations would never respect the autonomy of US merchants and would be forever impeding commerce of the country.

The first crisis for the country was in its dealings with the Barbary Powers. The North African countries allowed its citizens to raid American merchantmen in the Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea taking US sailors prisoner. The only way for America to combat these acts was to pay tribute to the rulers in Algiers. In response the US Congress authorized the building of six frigates to combat these forces. Payment of tribute averted the war with Algiers for the time being, but George Washington convinced Congress that the ships called for in 1794 were still necessary for the protection of commerce.[11]

By 1798 the potential for war existed with the European nations due to the ongoing wars of the French Revolution and the European interference with the US maritime trade. During this period debate renewed about the need for a standing military

force. Benjamin Stoddert took up the task of organizing the Navy under the newly created Department of the Navy. He also believed that a strong Navy was key to the defense of the country. In his letter to the Chairman of the Committee of the House of Representatives on 29 December 1798, Stoddert stated the need for a strong naval force to defend against the possible invasions from Europe: "Twelve Ships of Seventy four Guns, as many Frigates, and twenty or thirty smaller Vessels, would probably be found, our Geographical situation, & our means of annoying the Trade of the Maritime powers, considered, a force sufficient to insure our future peace with Nations of Europe."[12] He went on to explain that geographical distance between Europe and the US would allow this smaller force to render the prospect of invasion from Europe too costly to consider. Knowing that the government did not like to bear any unnecessary burden of expense for the military he also presented his idea on how to reduce the cost during peacetime:

> In time of peace a small proportion of this sum would be sufficient to keep the Ships, in a state of preservation. –Every material article for the building, and equipment of Ships of War, Copper excepted, and probably copper also, may be procured, the growth or manufacture, of our own Country.[13]

Benjamin Stoddert, in a few short pages to the Chairman, laid out a plan for the size, arming, building, and maintaining the Navy that included the genesis of an auxiliary fleet (war ships) maintained in lay-up until required. He even recognized the need to have American manufacturers supply the materials (at even higher cost) just to increase the skill and capacity for the shipbuilding and its support industries, reducing dependency on foreign markets.[14] The fleet he called for never materialized but he introduced the idea of strong navy backed by a shipping reserve into the ongoing debates.

President Thomas Jefferson, faced with the practicality of running the country and seeing the need for a solid defense for its commerce, had no illusion that his ideal peaceful world was but a dream. Even though he would have preferred that the US keep to itself and use foreign ships to carry the country's goods, he acknowledged that the nation was bound to her commerce. Jefferson saw that the need for a defense force primarily naval was required in some measure to protect the country's interests.

> Wars then must sometimes be our lot; and all the wise can do, will be to avoid that half of them which would be produced by our own follies and our own acts of injustice; and to make for the other half the best preparations we can. Of what nature should these be? A land army would be useless for offense, and not the best or safest instrument of defense. For either of these purposes, the sea is the field on which we should meet an European enemy.[15]

This realization of the need for a navy capable of meeting and defeating any invasion force from Europe lead him to recognize the shortsightedness in the Militia Act of 1792. Jefferson drafted a bill calling for the establishment of a Naval Militia in 1805. In this bill he called for the registering of all able-bodied white males between the ages of eighteen and forty-five to be enrolled in the naval militia and exempt from the land militia. Jefferson reasoned that the manpower it would take to run a wartime navy must be accounted and easily called to duty. His draft even made allowance for an annual training period of six days for instruction in artillery and maneuvering of the vessels assigned to the harbor defense.[16] The bill did not pass in Congress and the maritime defense of the nation continued to be in the hands of the active navy component.

As well as planning for a naval militia Jefferson also took steps to provide for a standing navy for the country's defense. Jefferson was concerned with two principles as he built the US naval forces. First keep the expense of a peacetime navy to the absolute minimum and second do not provoke a potential enemy by having the ability to wage an

offensive war. He achieved this by his desire to not have a large standing force, either navy or army, and by placing the bulk of his naval investment into the procurement of gunboats. It appears that the arguments for the nature of the defense of the US took up lines between the Northern States and the Southern States. The Northern States wanted a plan for the defense of the country that included the defense of the major seaports to include fortifications in cities like New York. The Southern States thought such a defense not feasible and a waste of money. Henry Adams points out in his book on the history of the Jefferson Administration that:

> The real argument for gunboats was their assumed cheapness; but Gallatin and the Northern Democrats, as well as the Federalists, foresaw that the supposed economy was a delusion. A gunboat cost some ten thousand dollars or less, and a whole flotilla of gunboats could be built for the price of a frigate; but no one could say how much this flotilla would cost in annual repairs or in actual service.[17]

Congress did pass the bill to buy as many gunboats as the Navy desired. If Jefferson's bill for a naval militia had passed it would have settled any manning issues for the vessels.

As the US found itself on the verge of war with European nations, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was not set up to conduct a protracted war and had few ships capable of conducting operations on the high seas. For all their debates on how to best protect the US from foreign invasion the Jefferson administration and Congress developed a less than optimal solution.

The Quasi-War with France and the War of 1812 were primarily naval wars for the US The British did invade with land forces and were met with poor resistance from the Militia and were able to go where they desired within the US (excepting New Orleans). The decisive battles at sea caused the European powers their most distress. The ships that took part were those built by the Frigate Acts of the 1790s. Fighting individual

and small fleet engagements the Navy was able to maintain the upper hand against the Europeans. Again, Congress supplemented the Navy with the authorization of Privateers to take the fight to French and British commerce. These were limited wars for both France and England, both preoccupied with their own war in Europe. The country was successful with the use of privateers. Of the 365 Privateers in the war with France they took 85 French vessels.[18] The War of 1812 achieved greater success. The 517 Privateers captured 1300 vessels compared to 254 captured by the Navy's 24 ships.[19] The French and British shipping was vulnerable on the high seas, and ultimately, their weariness of war and the continued expense of maintaining forces to cover their merchant fleets brought them to the negotiating tables.

Between Wars, 1816-1860

The strategy for the country did not change appreciatively over the next decade even though there was a general recognition of the poor performance of the militias during the War of 1812. The Militia system did not change appreciatively as the country fell back into a peacetime atmosphere.

Captain John Rogers, president of the Board of Navy Commissioners, was called upon to provide a broad naval program that could "provide for the 'the security and welfare of the Union.'"[20] In the 1836 report by the board he called for a large expanse in naval power. He states that:

> The board consider the proper limit for the extent of the naval force to be that which can be properly manned when the country may be involved in a maritime war.
>
> In estimating this extent, it is assumed that about ninety thousand seamen are employed in the foreign and coasting trade and fisheries. As the navigation has been generally increasing, there is little reason to apprehend any immediate diminution during peace. In any war which would require the employment of all

> our naval force, it is believed that such interruptions would occur to our commerce as would enable the navy to obtain without difficulty at least thirty thousand seamen and ordinary seamen; and if it should continue long, it is probable that a larger number might be engaged.[21]

Captain Rodgers clearly saw the limit to the size of the navy being the ability to man it in time of war. He would build a fleet of numerous ships of the line, frigates, and smaller vessels and place them in waiting until time of war when the thirty thousand sailors become available. While this proposal was never fully funded it provides an insight into the continuing philosophy of how to man a navy in time of war. The approach had not substantially changed from the Revolutionary days. The navy was relying on the maritime commerce to provide the bulk of the manpower for the wartime navy. There was one problem. Those seamen when put out of a job by war were subject only to the Militia Act of 1792 and would be required to serve in the land militia which means they would be unavailable to man the Navy when the need arose.

Chapter Conclusion

The founding fathers and the framers of the Constitution recognized the need for a standing navy and did have some foresight concerning the maritime dangers the county faced. An evolution in the development of the military is seen: from an almost purely militia-based force to a small active duty army and navy ready to defend the US interests. George Washington warned of “entangling” foreign alliances and the need for a standing military. Thomas Jefferson also concluded that a standing navy was best for the defense of the country. However, Congress would not agree to a large force even when faced with naval wars against Tripoli, France, and Britain. The Atlantic was a wall against foreign intervention and invasion and therefore a large military was unnecessary. When faced

with war Congress only authorized those naval forces needed to meet the adversary. The only long-term strategy was that of the last war; commerce raiding, and small battles between single ships.

The navy was the arm of the military least feared by the people. The navy could not subjugate them the way a standing army could. The navy was finally seen as needed because without it the maritime commerce of the county was doomed to interference from stronger nations and their raiders. Recognition of this fact led to the establishment of a small professional fleet that could protect American commerce on the high seas.

Visionaries and naval advocates, like Benjamin Stoddert and Captain John Rodgers, tried to convince the nation to provide for a larger force and only partially succeeded. What was clearly understood by all was that no matter the size of the standing navy, it needed augmentation in time of war. That augmentation would come from the officers and seamen in the merchant marine. The strong maritime traditions ensured the manning of the fleet whether the ships existed in lay-up or not. They missed the point that without an organized naval reserve or militia those sailors they needed would be subject to serve in the land militia. It appears only Thomas Jefferson realized that fact and initiated the only legislation to establish a naval militia, an institution necessary to his vision of a large gunboat fleet. After that bill failed, it would take another sixty years and a bloody civil war before the issue of a naval reserve resurfaced.

[1]Commander Rick Bigelow, USNR, CAPT(Sel) Mel Chaloupka, USNR, and LCDR Andy Rockett, USNR, *United States Naval Reserve: Chronology* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1992), 5.

[2]Ibid.; 32.

[3]Ruben Elmore Stivers, *Privateers and Volunteers: The Men and Women of Our Reserve Naval Forces: 1766 – 1866,* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1975), 17.

[4]Samuel Eliot Morison, John *Paul Jone: A Sailor's Biography,* (Annapolis, MD Naval Institute Press, 1959), 60.

[5]United States Naval Historical Center, "Biographies in Naval History, Captain John Barry" [article on-line] available from http://www.history.navy.mil/bios/barry_john.htm; Internet; accessed 18 February 2005.

[6]Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* vol. 2, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, DC: The Government Printing Office, 1904), 240.

[7]George Washington, *Basic Writings of George Washington,* ed. Saxe Commins (New York, NY: Random House, 1948), 605.

[8]US Congress, *Militia Act of 1792,* 2nd Congress, 1st Session, chapter 28, 2 May 1792

[9]Ibid.

[10]Washington, *Basic Writings of George Washington,* 647

[11]United States Naval Historical Center, "The Reestablishment of the Navy, 1787 – 1801 Historical Overview and Select Bibliography," [article on-line] available from http://www.history.navy.mil/biblio/biblio4/biblio4a.htm; Internet; accessed 14 November 2004, 2.

[12]Walter Millis, *American Military Thought,* (Indianapolis, ID: The Bobbs-Merill Company, Inc., 1966), 75.

[13]Ibid., 77.

[14]Ibid., 78.

[15]Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson,* 242

[16]Thomas Jefferson, *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Federal ed. 1904, vol 10 (1803 – 1807). [book on-line] available from http://oll.libertyfund.org/Texts/Jefferson0136/Works/Vol10/0054-10_Pt04_1805.html; Internet; accessed 21 February, 2005.

[17]Henry Adams, *History of the United States During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson 1801-1809*, (New York, NY: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1986), 846.

[18]Stivers, *Privateers and Volunteers*, 50.

[19]US Merchant Marine Organization (www.usmm.org), "American Merchant Marine and Privateers in the War of 1812," [article on-line] available from http://www.usmm.org/warof1812.html; Internet; accessed 21 February 2005

[20]Millis, *American Military Thought*, 121

[21]Ibid., 123.

CHAPTER 3

THE CIVIL WAR

Naval Preparations

As the United States expanded during the first half of the nineteenth century, fundamental differences developed between the northern states and the southern states that led to the US Civil War. The last chapter identified the need for a navy that could protect the US's maritime commerce, as well as a coastal defense force. The perceived enemies of the US were the European powers, principally England and France. Those forces required for protection of America dwelt mainly within the Navy; however, actual war would see the activation of a strong privateer fleet. The Navy's main duties meant it needed to be capable of defending against possible invasion. The Navy had to have substantial strength and be able to meet foreign navies on the high seas away from the American continent. The Navy also had to protect US interests abroad allowing free trade through the world's waters and protecting American merchant sailors from insult and harassment from all sources. The study of the Civil War served as an evolutionary step for the Navy that identified to the leadership a need for an established reserve force.

In the years leading up to 1860, the Navy's leadership, supported by Congress, was in most cases able to keep pace with the naval technological developments. Commander Dahlgren conducted experiments and developed heavy naval guns that could unleash an unprecedented weight in ordnance. But men-of-war constructed with steam engines to augment sails as the means for propulsion provided the major technological change during the period. The British produced the experimental iron-hulled ship *Warrior* and the French built *Gloire*, each a revolution in shipbuilding.[1] The combination

of steam propulsion and iron hulls had not been seen by the world before and their building combined two technological advancements into a leap forward in naval capability. The US did not appreciate the worth of iron armor for their ships and continued to seek wooden hulled steam ships as the backbone of the fleet leading to 1860. The Navy did not even consider asking Congress to provide funds for experiments in iron-clad vessels. [2] American designers believed the weight of ordnance was the deciding factor in battle and therefore built ships that were faster and carried a greater capacity for firepower than ships of equal size and class.

Isaac Toucey, Secretary of the Navy under President Buchanan, advocated the same view of a peacetime navy in his first Annual Report to Congress in 1858 as put forth in the past:

> It is not the policy of our government to maintain a great navy in time of peace. It is against its settled policy to burden the resources of the people by an overgrown naval establishment. It is universally admitted to be inexpedient to endeavor to compete with other great commercial powers in the magnitude of their naval preparations. But it is the true policy of our government to take care that its navy, within its limited extent, should be unsurpassed in its efficiency and its completeness, and that our preparatory arrangements should be such that no event shall take us altogether by surprise.[3]

New to the position in 1857, Toucey did not fully understand the importance of building a navy that could rival or intimidate other nations but he fully understood the requirement for quality in the nature of the ships that the US built. Over the course of his four years in office, Isaac Toucey became more convinced that a strong navy was the only proper way to defend the US from foreign powers.

In Toucey's subsequent reports, he advocated ships that had shallower drafts and more reliance on steam. He argued repeatedly for expansion of the Navy in increasingly strong language summing up his desires in his 1860 report:

> To be able at any time, at short notice, to throw a powerful naval force upon any given point where our interests are threatened or the lives of American citizens are in jeopardy, is not only a constitutional duty, but one of the safest, most beneficent, and salutary powers that can be intrusted to official hands under a republican form of government; and I cannot permit the present occasion to pass without most earnestly recommending the policy of a gradual, substantial, and permanent increase of the Navy, accompanied by the universal introduction into it of the motive power of steam.[4]

In four years he became a convert to naval power and recognized the opportunity that steam propulsion gave the United States to compete with the European powers as an equal. It is interesting to note that in this same report, he clearly put Congress on notice as to their moral obligation to build a strong navy as provided for in the Constitution. Toucey wrote, "The Constitution of the United States confers on Congress the power to maintain a navy, and prohibits the States from exercising any such power. . . . This transfer of power to Congress on one hand, and the total abnegation of it by the States on the other, creates the strongest possible political and moral obligation on the part of this government to provide and maintain a naval force adequate to our protection."[5] This interpretation of the Constitution clearly suggests that the Secretary believed that a State sponsored Naval Militia was unlawful. His idea for the manning of the navy only considered active duty service.

Secretary Toucey placed himself in the position of an honest broker for the naval service at least as far as he could within the Buchanan Administration. He called for an expansion in Navy vessels and of a design that called for shallow draft for use in "rivers and harbors of all foreign countries as well as our own."[6] The reasons he gave for expansion were deterrence and protection from other nations but it is likely that he also knew that these types of vessels would be of great value in the defense of the US with an ability to travel within the inter-coastal waterways.

In the early months of 1861, there were continuing indications that war was inevitable with the south and that the Navy would play a big part in the suppression of the southern states. Three months before hostilities, an article in the New York Times on January 26 prophesied "to preserve the integrity of the Union and the supremacy of the Constitution must be a coercion by sea. It must be mainly a matter of blockades."[7] A continuing theme in early 1861, this idea of blockading continued to reappear in the New York Times in the months before hostilities.

Buchanan's administration took little or no action as the Southern States seized naval shipyards, armories, and held elections for President and Vice-President of the Confederate States of America. Arguments between the President and General Winfield Scott on how best to provide for defense of Washington began appearing in the papers.[8] Buchanan was weak on keeping the southern states from seizing government property, forts, arsenals, and offered no defense or response to the South's actions. He gave commanders of these posts little support to hold out against the secessionist forces and the support and instructions he did provide were inadequate to protect government property.[9]

The Navy had an even more difficult problem to deal with as it prepared for war. It had fostered within its ranks a promotion system that cultivated a lack of vision in its officer corps. James Russell Soley, a prominent naval historian and future assistant Secretary of the Navy, summed up the inadequacies of the Navy's officer corps in his 1883 volume on the Civil War Navy:

> But the main object of a navy's existence in time of peace is to be in a condition of instant readiness for war, and this object can only be attained by having the ablest and most energetic men in the foremost places.

> Unfortunately, in 1861, the arrangement of the navy list failed to meet this essential condition of readiness for active operations. Long years of peace, the unbroken course of seniority promotion, and the absence of any provision for retirement, had filled the highest grade with gallant veterans most of whom had reached an age that unfitted them for active service afloat.[10]

Congress did act in 1855 to alter this situation by passing a law that allowed for the retirement of officers but altered it so much in the face of popular opinion that it lost all meaning.[11]

The Buchanan Presidency continued the policies found in most of the previous administrations that did not support the Navy's development. The lack of an officer corps complemented this continuing condition because the weak corps could not create an advocate of sea power. The system the US had for administering its Navy Department prior to the Civil War perpetuated mediocrity and did not call attention to the changing nature of maritime forces.

Organization for War

The condition of the Navy was one of inadequate preparedness as President Lincoln took office on March 4, 1861. That same day Lincoln appointed Gideon Welles as his Secretary of the Navy and gave him the task of preparing the Navy for war. A lawyer from Connecticut, Gideon Welles', only claim for experience with the Navy had been his role as chief of the Navy's Bureau of Provisions and Clothing in 1845. Welles proved to be an excellent organizer making up for his own shortcomings in operational experience by appointing Gustavus V. Fox his Assistant Secretary.[12] Fox, a former naval officer, volunteered for service at the outbreak of war and was chosen by Lincoln to head the naval relief effort of Fort Sumter. Upon his return he took up the duties as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.[13]

As the secession of the southern states occurred President Lincoln and his military advisor, General Winfield Scott, proposed the naval strategy for the war. This plan called for the blockade of the southern states. The task was daunting as the Navy had only four active ships in northern ports at the start of hostilities. In comparison, the British had only limited success with blockade of the American coastline during the War of 1812 using hundreds of ships.[14] It was now time to increase the size of the navy. It was not so much that the Navy did not have modern ships or qualified personnel but there was no direction prior to Lincoln's inauguration that would have prepared it for the Civil War. Lack of preparation was not the failure of Congress to act upon a well know set of facts but due more to the paucity of recognition as regards the need for a larger navy. The wars that had taken place since 1815 did not show any marked faults with the current organization of the naval system. As James Soley pointed out:

> The long period of profound peace that followed the wars of Napoleon had been broken only by the war with Mexico in 1846, the Crimean War in 1854, and the Franco-Austrian War in 1859. None of these was marked by naval operations on any important scale, and such operations as there were indicated but faintly the coming development.[15]

The Navy at the start of the Civil War was a conglomeration of old and new vessels and none were well suited to the task ahead of them. Most had drafts[16] that wouldn't allow effective patrol of harbors and rivers. Others were too old to stand up to the riggers of war, rotten hulls and weak timbers being the most common faults. Table 1 in Appendix A, lists the Navy's available shipping in 1861. From this list, it is easy to tell the Union was ill prepared for a blockade. At the commencement of hostilities the Navy had only four ships within home waters capable of providing blockade coverage of the entire Confederate coastline.

Gideon Welles inherited a Navy that was inefficient and in need of revitalization. He quickly set out to put the service on the right course and developed a plan that he put before Congress in December of 1861. Secretary Welles saw the mission of the Navy during the Civil War breaking down into three operations.

> 1. The closing of all the insurgent ports along a coast line of nearly three thousand miles, in the form and under the exacting regulations of an international blockade, including the naval occupation and defense of the Potomac river, from its mouth to the federal capital, as the boundary line between Maryland and Virginia, and also the main commercial avenue to the principal base of out military operations.
> 2. The organization of combined naval and military expeditions to operate in force against various points of the southern coast, rendering efficient naval co-operation with the position and movements of such expeditions when landed, and including also all needful naval aid to its operations on the Mississippi and its tributaries; and
> 3. The active pursuit of the piratical cruisers which might escape the vigilance of the blockading force and put to sea for the rebel ports.[17]

In the Secretary of Navy's Report to Congress July 4, 1861, he relayed the status of the Navy and its personnel. "These vessels had a complement, exclusive of officers and marines, of about 7,600 men, and nearly all of them were on foreign station."[18] Welles had a demoralized officer corps that saw 259 officers leave the service due to their allegiance with the southern States. He needed to form from these men a navy that could meet the demands of the war.[19] In the four months between taking office and his first report Welles set up methods to appoint acting lieutenants from the ranks of former naval officers and accept into service masters and masters mates. To fill out the ranks of the officer corps required rapid expansion to meet the manpower needs of the numerous ships being placed in commission.

As to the efficiency of the navy and its officer corps Welles laid out a plan in his December 1861 report to increase the number of grades of officers and for the establishment of a board system to recommend the fitness of officers to the President and

Senate. The establishment of a flag officer was recommended to Congress in order to appoint officers to command positions of squadrons where they may not be the senior officer present. He also recommended a retirement age and pension for those reaching forty-five years of active service.[20] These recommendations, adopted by Congress, gave Welles the ability to move officers out of positions that they were not qualified and move up those with the drive and abilities to carry out the Navy's missions.

His attention was not limited to the officer corps as he also notes with considerable pride the manner in which enlisted volunteers came forth to man the ranks of the service:

> The authorized increase of enlistment and the immediate establishment of naval rendezvous at all the principal seaports, with an abbreviation of the term of enlistment, enabled the department to recruit a sufficient number of seamen to man the vessels added to the service with almost as much rapidity as they could be prepared, armed, and equipped.[21]

Welles made a case to establish an ordnance department and as well as acting paymasters and surgeons. At this point of the crisis (1861 and 1862), those that believed the Navy's manning would come from the ranks of the merchant marine and fishing industry were proved correct and the requirement for the Naval Militia of Thomas Jefferson was not apparent. Others did not agree that enlisted manning was as easily found as Welles states. James Russell Soley, in his 1883 work on the Civil War states:

> Great as was the want of officers, the want of trained seamen was equally great. The complement of the navy had been fixed at 7,600. Of these there were on March 10, 1861, only 207 in all the ports and receiving-ships on the Atlantic coast. It was a striking illustration of the improvidence of naval legislation and administration, that in a country of thirty millions of people only a couple hundred were at the disposal of the Navy Department. . . . But at all times there was a difficulty in obtaining trained seamen. Large bounties were offered by State and local authorities for enlistment in the army, and transfers between the two services were not authorized by law. When the draft was established, mariners were subjected to it like other citizens, without any regard to the service which they

> would prefer, or for which they might be specially fitted. In assigning the quotas to each locality, no allowance was made to maritime communities for the seamen they had furnished; so that they were forced, in self-defense, to send their seafaring population into the army. In 1864, a law was passed correcting these evils; but meantime the navy suffered, and vessels were occasionally unable to go to sea for want of men.[22]

Secretary Welles would not have agreed that manning problems were as bad as Soley states. It was not until his report of 1863 that he acknowledges any problems with the draft law enacted by Congress. Using similar language to that of Soley he explains the adverse effect the draft had on the Navy but even with that he was still able to maintain enlistments at a rate of 2000 per month. The biggest problem was that seamen, engineers, and trained petty officers were opting for the Army due to the incentives it offered instead of going into the Navy that offered none. With Welles' explanation of the hardships Congress had put on the Navy Department, Congress acted in 1864 to add incentives and the ability for lateral transfer of those trained in the seagoing professions to transfer to the service of there choice. The Navy Department did not rely on enlistments from seafaring cities alone but took personnel into the ranks from various sources to include the employment of blacks fleeing slavery. In a letter to the Commander of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron in 1861, Welles gives direction on how to enlist runaway slaves into the ranks:

> Sir: The Department finds it necessary to adopt a regulation with respect to the large and increasing number of persons of color, commonly known as "contrabands," now subsisting at the navy-yards and on board ships-of-war.
>
> These can neither be expelled from the service, to which they have resorted, nor can they be maintained unemployed, and it is not proper that they should be compelled to render necessary and regular services, without a stated compensation. You are therefore authorized, when their services can be made useful, to enlist them for the naval service, under the forms and regulations as apply to other enlistments. They will be allowed, however, no higher rating than "boys," at a compensation of ten dollars per month and one ration per day.

In this letter issued before the emancipation proclamation, he settled the issue at least for the navy on how to deal with the fugitive slaves. At the same time he provided another method for manning the ships he was putting into service.

Gideon Welles had the Navy Department in hand and was moving to meet the war's requirements. He took action to expand the number of vessels the Navy had as well as method to man those ships with the most able officers available. The Navy volunteers were critical to having a trained pool of officers to organize and run the blockade. The only thing he lacked was a program to design and build ironclad steamers, which he asked Congress for the funds in this first report.[23]

In previous wars Congress issued Letters of Marque to Privateers authorizing commerce raiding of enemy shipping. This was the well-proven way to quickly augment the navy without having an established reserve system. It was a system that required no cost to and held little consequence for the government. Secretary Welles did not favor this type of warfare and in his 1863 letter to Secretary of State William Seward he explains his position.

> I have felt some delicacy, I may say disinclination, to take any active part in this matter, because I have form the beginning of our difficulties discouraged the policy of privateering in such a war as this we are now waging. The rebels have no commercial marine to entice and stimulate private enterprise and capital in such undertakings, provided the policy were desirable. . . .
>
> Propositions for privateers, for yacht squadrons, for naval brigades, volunteer navy, &c., &c. were, with the best intentions in most instances, pressed upon the Dep't, regardless of the consequences that might follow from these rude schemes of private warfare. It was to relieve us of the necessity of going into these schemes of private adventure, that the "Act to provide for the temporary increase of the Navy." Approved July 24, 1861, was so framed as to give authority to take vessels into the Naval service and appoint officers for them, temporarily, to any extent which the President may deem expedient.[24]

Secretary Welles did not like the business of privateering. He did not like the loss of control over their actions and thought it on the verge of being unlawful. The southern maritime commerce did not rate such action nor did the thought that the privateers could be used to track down and fight battles with the South's heavily armed raiders. In the conduct of the war against the rebellion, he did not want to offer any form of legitimacy to the Confederacy and fighting a war using privateers would give that level of legality to the raiders of the south. He was also familiar with the Declaration of Paris signed on 16 April 1856 by the major maritime powers of the world outlawing privateering. While the US was not an original signatory Welles became convinced that the US should abide by it. With his decision the Navy no longer had a vehicle for augmentation considered by many to be the first form of a naval reserve.

Chapter Conclusion

The Navy during the Civil War was able to take steps to reform conditions within its organization that would provide fertile ground for the professional and technical transformations of the late nineteenth century. The overhauling of the officer corps was likely the most significant event of the reorganization. The new rank system with promotions based on merit allowed the most qualified officers to rise to positions of authority. In these positions they would be able to steer the direction of the navy in years to come. The officers that were in key positions of leadership at the end of the war had seen the challenge of finding trained personnel to make up the ranks of the navy. Their experiences allowed them to realize that a reserve would have made the task of manning the service with qualified personnel easier than it had been. Under the able leadership of Gideon Welles the navy progressed into a formidable naval service. But once again with

the end of hostilities the Navy was reduced to a small force whose focus was to protect US commerce abroad.

Another significant outcome of the Civil War was the lack of dependence on the privateer system that America had relied in her previous wars. Privateering was looked at as an unlawful way of conducting warfare and was discarded from the US's legitimate recourses when faced with war. While viable in earlier wars, privateers took from the pool of seamen available to the navy. With this obstacle gone to manning the Navy had only the Army to contend with in recruitment of personnel in the future.

The Navy Department was still reliant at the end of the Civil War on the good graces of maritime profession providing volunteers in time of crisis. Even though laws were made concerning the draft of personnel into the military giving preference to seamen to join the navy, they did not create a system to monitor where these professionals were at any given time.

The Civil War set into motion the development of the officer corps as a professional organization. The professional naval officer was now required to build their careers on abilities and not longevity. This new professionalism provided the fertile environment that the thinkers within the Navy required to develop an American naval strategy that would carry it into the next century. The final impact of the US Civil War on a naval reserve was to solidify in the minds of those officers and officials within the Navy that had dealt firsthand with manpower shortages the belief that a reserve was required if the Navy was to engage in another large-scale war.

[1]Donald L Canney, *Lincoln's Navy, The Ships, Men, and Organization, 1861-65*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 16.

[2]*New York Times*. 28January 1861, 2.

[3]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 3 December 1857), 586.

[4]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 1 December 1860), 5.

[5]Ibid., 4

[6]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 6 December 1858), 7.

[7]*New York Times*. 26 January 1861, 1.

[8]*New York Times*. 1 February 1861, 1.

[9]Richard S. West, Jr., *Mr. Lincoln's Navy*, (New York, NY: Longmans, Green and Company. 1957; Reprint, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1976), 9.

[10]James Russell Soley, *The Navy in the Civil War*, vol.1, *The Blockade and the Cruisers*, (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), 4.

[11]Bern Anderson, *By Sea and By River, The Naval History of the Civil War*, (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 6.

[12]Ibid., 3-5.

[13]Charles B. Boynton, *The History of the Navy During the Rebellio*, (New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1867), 59.

[14]Watters, "*U. S. Naval Reserve: The First 75 Years*," 5.

[15]Soley, *The Navy in the Civil War*, 2.

[16]Daft is the measurement on a ship from the waterline to the lowest projection beneath the keel of a ship.

[17]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 2 December 1861), 3.

[18]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 4 July 1861), 86.

[19]Ibid., 86.

[20]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 2 December 1861), 17.

[21]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 4 July 1861), 92-93.

[22]Soley, *The Navy in the Civil War*, 9-10.

[23]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 4 July 1861), 96.

[24]Stivers, *Privateers and Volunteers*, 419-420.

CHAPTER 4

BUILDING A MARITIME STRATEGY

Identifying the Requirements of the Postwar Navy, 1865-1898

The post-Civil War period in the United States saw the Navy relapse into a third-rate navy without a strategy to support the nation's interests. Even before the official end of the war, the Navy began to reduce its numbers of ships. After the fall of Fort Fisher, the Navy Department began a massive cutback of ships and manpower.[1] The war was over and, once again, the most likely threats were an ocean away. The Atlantic Ocean offered the country its best defense, and it was widely believed that a large standing Navy would not be needed. In 1865, the Navy Department turned its attention to the re-establishment of its foreign squadrons for the purpose of showing the flag and defending the rights of American commerce abroad as it had prior to the war.[2] At the same time, Gideon Welles in a prophetic statement on the nature of naval warfare wrote in his 1866 report to Congress:

> In future maritime wars the contests between the great naval powers for supremacy on the high seas will be determined chiefly by iron-clad or armored ships. Our turreted vessels or monitors will be powerful and effective for harbor and coast defence[sic], but in conflict with any European power our countrymen will hardly be content with merely defensive warfare.[3]

Secretary Welles in this brief statement summarized not only the type of a navy required by seafaring nations but addressed the nature of the American spirit when confronted by war.

Movement towards Naval Enlightenment

Over the next few years, military professionals started to look at how countries might threaten the United States. The nature of the world and the quick pace of technological improvements in naval construction and weaponry required the professional naval officer to stay abreast of not only their own navy but also that of the navies which they may face in conflict. The first military periodical of note was the *Army and Navy Journal* first published during the Civil War years. As early as 1866 the *Army and Navy Journal* started to publish articles on "Coastal Defense."[4] Within this and other related articles they discussed how the development of steam ships had rendered coastal defense batteries obsolete. Ships could press into harbors regardless of the fire that the large harbor defense guns could produce. Ships were no longer dependent on the wind and seas to make approach to the shores and could assault the coasts from any position of advantage. These articles advocated the development of new defensive posture to make safe the shores of the United States. This became a recurring theme in the Navy section of the journal through the late 1800s.[5] These arguments, echoed in the United States Naval Institute *Proceedings* another of the US's military professional journals established in 1874, shows the lack of defense the US had in combating a foreign invader. Articles such as these continued to add weight for the need of a modern navy and the changes it would bring to shipbuilding and manning at the end of the nineteenth century.

Arguments for improvements were not left to the pages of the professional journals but were also carried forward in official Navy Department correspondence from the Secretary of the Navy to the President and Congress. Many of the reports after the Civil War showed a concern in the ability to keep the Navy manned with the best

personnel they could muster. A revitalized Naval Apprentice System was one means by which the US could foster interest in the nation's boys (ages 14–18) to join the seafaring professions. Its goal was to expose and prepare young men in naval practices. The Secretary the Navy had great aspirations for the system as he said in 1866: "By its policy the government is giving a stimulus to a long desired and greatly needed improvement in the moral and intellectual character of the seamen of the country, and establishing among them an abiding attachment for the naval service."[6] The British also understood the need to train boys and young men in the maritime traditions and had established their own training ships for the same purpose.[7] These efforts by the two governments were designed to put life back into the maritime professions but in the case of the United States the decline of maritime commerce was due to more than just a lack of interested young men.

Those in the maritime services recognized that the country's merchant marine was slipping into an irrecoverable decline and that with its decline the manpower requirements of the navy in war would no longer be met in the large numbers expected of the merchant marine service as they had received before and during the Civil War. The US was not the only nation feeling the pressure by a lack of seamen. The British found that they too were having difficulty getting good seamen into their maritime services and keeping them interested.[8] George M. Robeson who took over the office of Secretary of the Navy in 1869 faced with the concern for a lack of skilled seamen from the merchant marine advocated the creation of a new system that could supply large numbers of seamen to the navy in time of war.[9] For the Secretary and naval officers, the Naval Reserve became a two-fold problem for the country starting in the 1870s. First, was the

question of auxiliary ships required for a naval reserve fleet and the second was how to man those ships and fill the ranks of the active ships.

The Secretary of the Navy's report in 1869 was first to spell out the relationship of the Navy to the country's maritime commerce. It pointed out that the bulk of commerce entering and leaving US ports were carried on foreign ships. And their respective governments subsidized those ships that could easily be converted to naval duties.[10] Robeson goes on to make the point that:

> A comparatively small force of this kind, appropriately armed and let loose on the ocean, under the command of bold and intelligent officers, would be a dangerous foe to the commerce of any country. Our own was substantially driven from the seas by two or three roughly equipped vessels, much inferior in power to those of which I have spoken. Thus it is seen that, in giving up this field to the occupation of other nations, and yielding to them the commercial advantages which naturally belong to our own position and resources, we at the same time relinquish our own weapons and arm our possible enemies.[11]

The Navy Secretary's concerns were that foreign governments were undercutting the shipping costs of US transports by subsidizing their own carriers, and that the use of foreign shipping by American exporters was partially paying for an auxiliary navy that could be used to destroy what commercial shipping the US possessed. Robeson, whether intentionally or not, was piecing together a fledgling maritime strategy that took in all forms of maritime issues and was putting forth his desire to prepare both the merchant and navy ships for the potential conflicts that could arise.

Prior to the US Civil War the majority of the nation's exports were transported on US flagged shipping. The maritime shipping industry was a strong and thriving global enterprise. The Civil War changed that matrix. The bulk of the blame was put on the Confederate commerce raiders chasing the maritime shipping from the seas.[12] In 1840, 82.9 percent of maritime commerce was being carried by American transports. By 1870

that percentage had dropped to 35.6 with no indication of increase. (See Appendix A for a detailed table) Other reasons for the decline were the preponderance of inexpensive shipping using other country's merchant ships and lack of support in the form of incentives for US shipping from Congress.

The poor state of the US Navy was brought into clear focus in 1873 when the American merchant ship *Virginius* was seized by the Spanish government in Cuba. The ship and her crew were accused of supplying guns to the Cuban rebels by the Spanish authorities. The master, members of the crew, and many passengers were court-martialed by the Spanish in Cuba and executed without benefit of a defense. Even though the Spanish had proof of the crew's guilt popular opinion in the US called for the punishment of Spain for their actions. When the Navy was looked at as a possible means of intervention, the government found out how woefully inadequate the navy was as an instrument of power. The Navy consisting of wooden hulled steam and sail driven ships armed with smooth bore cannon, plus a handful of monitors was no match for a more modern navy.[13] The Navy Department re-commissioned several Civil War era vessels and conducted an exercise off Key West. This exercise only proved to emphasize the decrepit nature of the navy.[14] Alfred T. Mahan, then commander of a navy shipyard, wrote Senator Merriman explaining his views on the status of the navy, which led to Mahan appearance before Congress to explain his views in detail.[15] While the Secretary of State Hamilton Fish brought the situation to a peaceful end, the strength of the American Navy was called into doubt.[16] While the language of the official reports of the Secretary of the Navy up to this time was always positive the underlying condition of the navy was far from healthy.

Captain S. B. Luce in 1874 made use of the very first meeting of the United States Naval Institute when he read his article on "The Manning of Our Navy and Mercantile Marine."[17] In this article, published in the USNI *Proceedings* (*Proceedings* was initially the published minutes of meetings held by the Naval Institute) he tied the success of the Navy to the success of the merchant marine and vice versa. Luce believed that education and training were key, and that the success of any great navy relied on the trained officers and men. He quoted the thoughts of the French Admiral de Joinville in his article,

> "The question of fitting out a fleet is not a mere question of finance. Money can always be raised by the state, and money will produce any number of craft; but money will not make sailors; gold will not make a disciplined crew nor an experienced staff of officers; and of what use are ships without the living soul to command and the ready hands to obey? To collect, form, and train these should be the first solicitude of a great maritime power, as it is the most important part of its tasks."[18]

Luce believed the establishment of training facilities on board naval auxiliaries would be the best way to train the reserves based on the European models.

That very same year, with the support of Captain Luce Congress approved legislation to establish maritime schools throughout the country.[19] Congress directed that the Secretary of the Navy furnish vessels, equipment, and officers to these schools to ensure proper instruction and material were available to make them successful.[20] Congress saw the virtue of a maritime education system that could support both commercial and naval requirements. With the Navy Department writing the curriculum and providing the instructors to the states' maritime schools the merchant marine would have the requisite knowledge for service in the navy during time of war.

In the following years the United States Naval Institute's *Proceedings* became the primary means by which naval officers presented their ideas and opinions for the future

of the Navy. These works took on all forms from technical arguments to recommendations on naval administration. In his 1879 article Rear-Admiral Daniel Ammen, a naval historian and author of a history on the Civil War, added his comments to the need for a volunteer augmentation force during time of war:

> Hundreds of officers were appointed form the merchant service, many of them having excellent qualities, and knowledge as seamen, who readily learned the routine of naval duty, and how to manage large numbers of men effectively, on the deck of a vessel. . . .
> The volunteer officers called into the service were many times more numerous than the officers belonging to the regular Navy; and such would doubtless be the case again should we have a war with a great naval power.
> However able, as seamen, those of our merchant service may be, and however gifted in character, as a class, they would require special training to enable them to effectively direct and control the operations of large numbers of men.[21]

Ammen was making a case for a system of training that could provide the specific naval training lacking in the merchant marine force. The discussions in these early years of debate address more the problem but never point out a clear solution.

In 1880 Lieutenant Charles Belknap, a naval officer writing for *Proceedings*, had this to say about wartime manning:

> The difficulty of obtaining seamen to man our vessels, during the late war, was seriously felt. We cannot rely upon merchant seamen, for the class has through so many causes become so deteriorated as to be generally worthless; and so large a proportion are foreigners that they cannot be depended upon to fight for the country that employs them. While the raw recruit may in a comparatively short time be converted into the disciplined soldier, the sailor is made only from the boy. The number of training ships should be increased and twenty five hundred boys, at least, enlisted in addition to the regular complement of the Navy.[22]

Belknap looking at the state of the merchant marine was clear on the subject that the navy needed to look somewhere else to find the manning for the navy in war.

Lieutenant Carlos G. Calkins, winner of the 1883 Naval Institute essay contest, again echoed these thoughts in 1883 in his prize-winning essay for *Proceedings*.

> The creation of a war navy for the United States must involve not only the training of a large force of seamen and the construction of a fleet, but also a complete transformation of the methods and appliances heretofore provided for these purposes. For this vast work a large and highly educated force of officers will be required. Such a force has never been improvised in any country, and the decadence of our maritime industries forbids any hope that it might be improvised here. . . . Reliance upon feeble maritime industries for the material resources of defense may involve delay and disaster in the event of war.[23]

By 1883 the discussions had turned away from a reliance on the merchant marine and was looking for a replacement system to fill the void left by the deterioration of the commercial service.

At the same time as these articles on the Naval Reserve were being published, the state of the Navy took a decided upturn. With the Garfield administration came the beginnings of "a naval renaissance that culminated in the creation of an armored battle fleet prior to the Spanish-American War.[24] The growth of the US's commercial markets overseas and the call for a canal to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans sea power was an issue that was coming to the forefront of the American political scene. Naval officers wrote on a wide variety of topics each building towards and calling for a national maritime strategy. The Secretary of the Navy during the administration was William H. Hunt, a southern lawyer and staunch Republican, whose only ties with the navy was that his son was naval officer.[25] In response to his finding the navy in poor condition he appointed a naval review board to give advice on the "immediate needs of the Navy."[26] The board's results recommended a sizable increase in the number of warships required for the protection of the country. By putting forward these recommendations to Congress Secretary Hunt was also advocating a proactive maritime policy to change the navy from

what Admiral David D. Porter, the leading US naval officer of the time, evaluated it as twelfth in world stature, to one that could rival any of the top navies or the period.

In the minds of the officers writing during this period (1870 to 1890), the creation of the naval reserve filled the gap in United States' emergent maritime defense plan. James Russell Soley, an international lawyer, naval historian, and professor at the US Naval Academy, used his history of the Civil War published in 1883 to promote a plan for the creation of a reserve system.

> A trained reserve force is a greater necessity for the navy than for the army, not because the one service is more important than the other, but because its ranks are less easily recruited . . . the navy combines two professions – each an occupation by itself--the military and the nautical. Hence the greater necessity for the navy of a large body of trained officers; and hence, also, the greater importance of a partially-trained naval reserve.[27]

Soley would later become the Assistant Secretary of the Navy from 1890 to 1893 and bring these views into the office with him.

Naval Philosophy Is Born

The Naval War College was established in 1885 when Commodore S. B. Luce opened the doors of the former poor house in Newport, Rhode Island. The student body for the first year's class was no more than eight officers. Luce faced formidable opposition to the War College and had to fight for its establishment over strong objections from members of the House Naval Committee and the superintendent of the Naval Academy who believed the War College a threat.[28] Captain Alfred T. Mahan, who continued the struggle against opposition from the naval establishment, replaced Luce who was called away at the end of the first year. With the creation of the War College an official forum was created that allowed and encouraged young officers to discuss broad

topics on naval and maritime strategy. It became another voice that helped to communicate the growing need for a national military strategy. Mahan used his position to continue to drum up support for the War College and a continuing education program for naval officers. He invited numerous outside speakers to address the fledgling classes, most notably was a young Theodore Roosevelt who had just written a book called *The Naval War of 1812*.[29] The acquaintance between these two men, Mahan and Roosevelt, would continue over the years as both gained in reputation and power.

All along the debates on the naval reserve continued into the late 1880s when the Committee on Naval Affairs proposed the first bill for the establishment of a Naval Reserve in 1887. The bill, sponsored by Senator Whitthorne, supported the logic of the era in its stated purpose.

> It is submitted that the primary object and purpose of the bill is to increase the naval strength of these United States, and, secondly, in so doing to aid in the development of the commercial marine, from which source and without it there could be none, the strength of the Navy, or in other words its maintenance must be drawn.[30]

The next Secretary of the Navy, William C. Whitney, in his 1887 report to Congress dedicated a section on the Naval Reserve. In it he relates the increased public opinion for the creation of a Naval Reserve to help provide for coastal defense and the increased demand for personnel at the outbreak of war.[31] In a few short sentences he sums up the genesis of a plan for the reserves:

> The Department has informed itself fully of the different systems of organization for coast defense and naval reserves at present in force in foreign countries, and is prepared to formulate a general plan for a similar organization to meet the requirements and conditions of our own institutions. It should resemble in organization that of the militia or national guard, rest upon the foundation of local interest, contemplate the employment and rapid mobilization of steamers enrolled on the auxiliary navy list, and be calculated to produce the best results upon a comparatively small national expenditure.[32]

While Whitney did not go into detail on what the reserve should be he does state the foundation of elements that it must contain. Those elements were personnel supplied from a militia system and auxiliary naval ships available from the maritime commercial fleet.

One of the most detailed arguments for the establishment of a naval reserve again came out of the USNI *Proceedings*. Captain A. P. Cooke, a active naval officer and member of the Naval Institute, wrote a convincing article in 1888 that touched on every aspect of what components not only make a great naval power but that great power requires an efficient naval reserve to maintain that prominence. He discussed the need for a strong maritime service for it was "the birth-place of our navy, and must ever be a nursery for the gallant men who are to make our flag respected and feared upon the ocean."[33] He went on to discuss the nation's requirement for a shipbuilding industry as the foundation of a naval power. The article also advocated the subsidizing of the shipbuilding industries to manufacture ships that could be used as naval auxiliaries, which would only improve the nation's ability to build pure naval vessels and allow the expansion of the Navy through the impressment of the auxiliaries in time of need.[34]

Several members of the United States Congress, especially Senator Whitthorne, continued to recognize the benefits of having a reserve system in place in 1888 with another bill on the Enrollment of a Naval Militia. The key sentence in the bill read, "With such organization and utilization of their reserve naval strength the United States with but a small expenditure of money on the regular Navy may and can rapidly place this Government in a position to command respect as a naval power, a position so necessary to the security of our coasts, the commerce of our citizens, and the majesty of our

Government."[35] The Navy recognized the need for a Naval Reserve in 1887 and 1888 but Congress was not yet ready to adopt a naval reserve system. The reason for their resistance was due more to a reluctance to change without a threat than an outright disagreement with the philosophy.

In 1888 the subject of the Naval Reserves was so highly regarded by Captain A. T. Mahan, president of the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, that he made it the subject of one of the sessions in the academic year.[36] The lecture, later published in its entirety in *Proceedings*, was given by Lieutenant Sidney A. Staunton, an instructor at the Naval War College. It provides a look at the British model of naval reserves from which to compare a proposed US system. The use of the British model was due to its voluntary nature being the most closely associated to the volunteer force of the US By starting with the analysis of a foreign reserve system to prove the value of a reserve system, Staunton turned to the merits of the proposed reserve system of the US found in the 1887 and 1888 Whitthorne Bills. They included:

> 1st. The enrollment of a Naval Militia, to include that portion of the general militia of the country engaged in seafaring occupations (including river and lake traffic) and in those which are allied to seafaring pursuits...
>
> 2d. The organization by the States of batteries of Volunteer Naval Artillery and crews of Volunteer Torpedo-men, to be recruited form the naval Militia, and from others who may desire to serve in them. The strength of these units of organization is fixed by the bill. All details of organization, uniform, titles and instruction are left to the discretion of the navy Department, but must be the same throughout the several States and Territories. . . .
>
> 3d. The calling out by the President of these bodies of naval volunteers for annual drill, under the control of the Navy Department and the immediate direction of naval officers. . . .
>
> 4th. The enrollment for terms of five years of a navigating naval Reserve, consisting of officers, seamen, engineers and firemen from the merchant service and other nautical and aquatic pursuits, who are American citizens, and who qualify before a naval board.[37]

The Naval Reserve talked of in this article and in the bills of 1887 and 1888 would be formed from the states' militias for those men in the seafaring trade. This proposal echoes the Naval Militia Bill of Thomas Jefferson but at the same time gave control to the Navy for training, supplying, and arming the militias and maintaining uniformity throughout the country.

The Navy Department and its supporters continued to point to the examples of how other nations were maintaining their navies and merchant marine. All the major European powers [e.g. France, England, Germany, and Italy] made use of a national naval reserve. These countries trained, equipped, and paid their reservists. They positioned naval auxiliary ships in ports throughout their nation as training ships for their naval reserves. Subsidies for ships built to meet naval specifications for speed and the ability to carry armament when required provided their navies with ready ships to mobilize.[38]

Debates continued in Congress and in the Navy. The arguments for a Naval Reserve were many; there was concern that the Navy did not have the ability to quickly gather personnel to expand the fleet in time of war. The ability to maintain the mobilization information on officers and men was becoming even more difficult. The building of naval ships was a long expensive process and naval auxiliaries under the maintenance of the Naval Reserve were relatively cheap. As noted in Congressional Report 2735 on 26 June 1888,

> The maintenance of a naval reserve force is a measure of economy. Under such a system, a body of men supporting themselves by ordinary civil pursuits is enrolled and trained by the Government sufficiently for its purposes, in the event of war, at comparatively small expense. England maintains, at the present time,

> with an annual expenditure of less than $2,000,000, an auxiliary naval force twice as large as the entire American Navy.[39]

With other nations subsidizing their merchant ships as auxiliaries, those merchants could undercut the price of transporting goods overseas putting the US commerce at greater disadvantage. This contributed to the decline of the merchant marine and further eroded the ready pool of personnel the Navy had always counted on in previous wars.

As a result of the debates states began to form their own naval militias. They formed men into naval battalions for the purpose of coastal and harbor defense. These militia units gave patriotic men with some seafaring skill the ability to serve their country; it may have also served to put down fears that the US coastlines were weakly defended as tensions increased between the US and Spain over Cuba.

The first state to set up a Militia was Massachusetts in 1888, followed by New York in 1889. By 1896 fifteen states had formed naval militias totaling 3,339 officers and men.[40] The personnel that joined were generally from large population centers on lakes and seas but with very little seagoing experience. The Navy Department was mandated to support the maintenance of state militias on the basis of having a ready source of personnel identified and by providing ships to help train them. The naval militia proved to be the only substantial inroad during this period to address the manning of a naval reserve.

In 1889, legislation passed Congress providing subsidies to merchants for those steamships that qualified for conversion to auxiliaries of sufficient speed and able to carry at least four six-inch guns. However, the passage of this bill saw no appreciative rise in shipbuilding in the US[41] The legislation did provide a legal basis for the creation

of an auxiliary navy able to supplement the standing Navy, which completed the two requirements for a naval reserve.

President Benjamin Harrison in his annual address to Congress on December 6, 1892 clearly understood the need to expand the naval reserves in the form of both naval auxiliaries and naval militia.

> Ever since our merchant marine was driven form the sea by the rebel cruisers during the War of the Rebellion the United States has been paying an enormous annual tribute to foreign countries in the shape of freight and passage moneys. . . . In the year 1892 only 12.3 per cent of our imports were brought in American vessels. These great foreign steamships maintained by our traffic are many of them under contracts with their respective Governments by which in time of war they will become a part of their armed naval establishments. Profiting by our commerce in peace, they will become the most formidable destroyers of our commerce in time of war.[42]

President Harrison was clearly calling for an increase in subsidies for the US Shipbuilders and merchant services. He also recognized and approved the formation of State Naval Militias and encouraged their continued support. By setting the conditions for shipbuilding industries to flourish, Harrison contended that it would only be a matter of time before the capitalist shipbuilding enterprises would take hold. “The development of a naval militia, which has been organized in eight States and brought into cordial and cooperative relation with the Navy, is another important achievement.”[43]

Secretary of the Navy, Hilary A. Herbert, in his 27 November 1895 report to Congress suggested a reserve system for adoption by the US In his discussion he compares the various systems found in the European nations. The comparison shows a similar mindset on the part of the naval powers studied that having fleet assets at various stages of readiness was a sound economic practice.[44] What he found was that the European powers maintained around 40 percent of their fleets in active condition with the

remaining 60 percent in some form of fleet reserve or layup. The ships in the reserve fleet were depending on the type of reserve able to be activated in days or weeks depending on the nature of the crisis. He further reported that these ships would periodically be activated to train the mobilization forces they supported. Herbert advocated a similar system were as the new vessels were commissioned into the fleet older but still capable vessels would be transferred to the fleet reserve for use if needed. In the same report the Secretary recommended the State Militias be established as permanent part of the national defense.[45]

The Cleveland administration continued to stress the importance of a naval reserve when Cleveland himself stated in his 7 December 1896 address to Congress:

> The Naval Militia, which was authorized a few years ago as an experiment, has now developed into a body of enterprising young men, active and energetic in the discharge of their duties and promising great usefulness. This establishment has nearly the same relation to our Navy as the National Guard in the different States bears to our Army, and it constitutes a source of supply for our naval forces the importance of which immediately apparent.[46]

The continuing support of a naval reserve system in the US was passing from administration to administration. It became part and parcel of the rejuvenation of the navy as a whole but other than the naval militias, limited to thirteen states, no legislation was passed to make it a permanent fixture of the Navy.

Captain Alfred T. Mahan, the leading naval theorist of late nineteenth century, stated the need for a trained and ready naval reserve force in his article in Harpers's New Monthly Magazine in March of 1897 when he states:

> Preparedness for naval war therefore consists not so much in the building of ships and guns as it does in the possession of trained men, in adequate numbers, fit to go on board at once and use the material, the provision of which is merely one of the essential preparations for war. The word "fit" includes fairly all that detail of organization commonly called mobilization, by which the

> movements of the individual men are combined and directed. . . . Provide your fit men, – fit by their familiarity not only with special instruments, but with a manner of life, – and your mobilization is reduced to a slip of paper telling each one where he is to go. He will get there.
>
> That a navy, especially a large navy, can be kept fully manned in peace – manned up to the requirements of war – must be dismissed as impracticable. If greatly superior to a probable enemy, it will be unnecessary; if more nearly equal, then the aim can only be to be superior in the number of men immediately available, and fit according to the standard of fitness here generalized. The place of a reserve in any system of preparation for war must be admitted, because inevitable. The question of the proportion and character of the reserve, relatively to the active force of peace, is the crux of the matter. This is essentially the question between long-service and short service systems. With long service the reserves will be fewer, and for the first few years of retirement much more efficient, for they have acquired, not knowledge only, but a habit of life. With short service, more men are shoved through the mill of the training-school. Consequently they pass more rapidly into the reserve, are less efficient when they get there, and lose more rapidly, because they have acquired less thoroughly; on the other hand, they will be decidedly more numerous, on paper at least, than the entire trained force of a long-service system.[47]

With the support of Mahan the Navy and the Naval Reserve had a powerful spokesman for its cause. The war with Spain over the plight of the Cuban rebels was nearing and soon the country would see if the state naval militia system would be sufficient for war.

Chapter Conclusion

With the realization of an imminent war with Spain, the Navy started making plans for the use of a Naval Auxiliary and the existing militias. The first thought was for the defense of the coasts under the responsibility of each of the Naval Militias. Active duty captains placed in command of re-commissioned Civil War monitors crewed by naval militia personnel. The shortages of manpower aboard the Navy's seagoing vessels quickly changed the tasking of the naval militia to provide augmentation of the fleet and to manning the auxiliary and receiving ships on the Atlantic coast. To meet this need,

Congress passed legislation to enable the personnel in the state naval militias to be re-designated as a naval auxiliary force.

Over the course of the nearly four decades leading up to the Spanish-American War the navy and its supporters continually discussed the benefits of having an established reserve for the Navy. While much effort was expended putting forward arguments for a national naval reserve, the only action came from states whose position on the nation's coasts made them vulnerable to attack. Throughout this period the Secretaries of the Navy crafted well-written documents giving the impression that the Navy was for the most part a thriving concern while its core was rotten and incapable of putting up even the most meager defense. After the *Virginius* incident in 1873 there was no hiding the decrepit state of the Navy. The administrations that followed started to put new life into the Navy and realized that if the goal was to build the Navy up from its twelfth place standing it would take more that an active duty only navy. The professionalism inspired by the Naval War College and the United States Naval Institute brought forward the best in the concerned naval officers. While US naval officers were forced to sit on the sidelines and watch other navies grow in power and stature, those same officers observed the technological breakthroughs and evolutions in naval affairs. By the time the US started its naval renaissance the officer corps was ready to put into practice what they had learned through observation to include using the naval militias as their naval reserve.

The Spanish-American War would be the first test of the US new navy against an established European power and with that test there would be lessons taken that would impact the active as well as the reserve forces.

[1]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 4 December 1865), 4.

[2]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 3 December 1866), 12.

[3]Ibid., 26.

[4]"Coastal Defense" *Army and Navy Journal* vol. 4 (23 June 1866): 700.

[5]See, "Our Harbor Defenses" *Army and Navy Journal*, vol. 4 (26 January 1867): 356; "Floating Batteries for Defense" *Army and Navy Journal*, vol. 15 (29 September 1877): 126; and Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 3 December 1866), 29.

[6]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 2 December 1867), 21.

[7]"English Training Ships," *Army and Navy Journal* vol. 4 (19 January 1867): 343.

[8]"Scarcity of British Seamen" *Army and Navy Journal*, vol. 4 (22 September 1866, 71.

[9]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 1 December 1869), 21.

[10]Ibid., 16.

[11]Ibid., 14.

[12]*Ibid*., 16

[13]Foxhall Parker, "Our Fleet Maneuvers in the Bay of Florida." *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, vol. 1 (1873): 168-9.

[14]Paolo E. Coetta, ed., *American Secretaries of the Navy, Volume I, 1775 – 1913* (Annapolis, MD; Naval Institute Press. 1980), 373.

[15]Richard S. West, Jr., *Admirals of American Empire* (Indianapolis, IN; The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1948), 74 and 88.

[16]James E. Watters, Commander, USNR, CDR Walt Johanson, USNR, and CAPT (Sel) Mel Chaloupka, USNR, "*U. S. Naval Reserve: The First 75 Years*" (Newport, RI. Naval War College, 1992), 22.

[17]Captain S. B. Luce, USN, " The Manning of Our Navy and Mercantile Marine." *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, vol. 1 (1874): 17–37.

[18]Ibid., 21.

[19]Rear Admiral Albert Gleaves, USN, *Life and Letters of Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, US Navy* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), 140.

[20]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 1 December 1874), 13.

[21]Rear-Admiral Daniel Ammen, USN, " The purpose of a Navy and the Best Methods of Rendering It Efficient" *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, vol. 5 (13 February 1879): 122-124.

[22]Lieutenant Charles Belknap, USN, "The Naval Policy of the United States" *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, vol. 4 (1880): 390.

[23]Lieutenant Carlos G. Calkins, USN, "How May the Sphere of Usefulness of Naval Officers Be Extended in Time of Peace with Advantage to the Country and the Naval Service?" *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, Vol. 9 (28 March 1883): 156.

[24]Coetta, *American Secretaries of the Navy*, 389.

[25]Ibid., 390.

[26]Ibid., 391.

[27]Soley, *The Navy in the Civil War*, 11.

[28]West, *Admirals of American Empire*, 95.

[29]Ibid.

[30]US Congress. Senate. *Report Number 1987*, 2.

[31]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 1 December 1877), 16.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Cooke, A. P. Captain, USN, "Our Naval Reserve and the Necessity for Its Organization." *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, vol. 14 (1888) 171.

[34]Ibid., 172.

[35]US Congress. House. Committee on Naval Affairs, *Enrollment of a Naval Militia, etc. Report number 2735*. 50th Congress, 1st Session, 26 June 1888, 4.

[36]Alfred Theyer Mahan, Captain, USN, "Address of Captain A.T. Mahan, US Navy" *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, vol. 14 (1888) 621.

[37]Sidney A. Staunton, LT, USN, "Naval Reserves and the Recruitng and Training of Men" *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, vol. 15 (1889) 1.

[38]US Congress. House. Committee on Naval Affairs, *Enrollment of a Naval Militia, etc. Report number 2735*. 50th Congress, 1st Session, 26 June 1888, 9 – 21.

[39]Ibid., 7.

[40]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 3 December 1896), 20.

[41]Harold Thomas Wieand, "The History of the Development of the United States Naval Reserves 1889 – 1941" (Unpublished Research Paper, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. 1953), 33.

[42]James A. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents 1789-1897 vol. 9* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1898), 322.

[43]Ibid., 324

[44]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 27 November 1895), 32.

[45]Ibid., 43.

[46]Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents 1789-1897 vol. 4*, 734.

[47]Alfred Thayer Mahan, Captain, USN, *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1917), 206-207.

CHAPTER 5

THE NAVAL RESERVE COMES OF AGE, 1898-1916

The Impact of the Spanish-American War on the Naval Reserve

The Spanish-American War was the first test of how the state organized naval militias would be integrated into the country's war effort. The war was a result of US desires to support Cuban rebels and to satisfy the call for the US to expand the country's role on the world scene.[1] The Caribbean was seen as key to maintaining US dominance in the Americas and continued interference from European nations severely undermined the US's ability to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. As the tensions increased over Cuba the US sent the battleship *Maine* to Havana harbor in January 1898 to protect American interests. On February 15, the battleship blew up with the loss of two hundred and sixty six lives.

The cause of the explosion was immediately investigated but before the cause was known the US Congress authorized an emergency bill appropriating $50,000,000 for national defense. The country was ready for a fight with Spain that had been brewing since the *Virginius* affair. Clark Reynolds in his work on the *Command of the Seas* showed that the Navy was putting great effort in their plans for engaging in a war with Spain.

> In the 1890s however, the Spanish suppression of Cuban rebels and two German warships forcing concessions from Haiti combined with Mahan's writings to stimulate American imperial designs in the Caribbean. . . . The US Navy implemented long-standing strategic war plans and turned over strategic direction to a Naval War Board that included Mahan. Neither side contemplated attacking the others homeland, though the hysterical American public caused substantial naval forces to be tied down to coastal defense.[2]

The Navy Department immediately took on the task of expanding the navy, first by the purchase of 128 ships able to be converted to naval purposes and then by authorization to increase the manning of the navy to crew those ships.[3] Prior to the start of hostilities the Navy expanded its manning by almost double going from a peacetime navy of 12,500 to 24,123.[4] The Navy used several methods to reach their wartime manning levels. The Navy brought back 225 retired officers in ranks from Rear Admiral down to Mates. They called for volunteer officers bringing in 456 line officers, 64 medical officers, 64 pay officers and 205 engineering officers. They also allowed for an enlisted volunteer force that was really no different from regular enlistments other than the duration of the enlistment was one year instead of four or five. The Navy also activated the States Naval Militias. In the Navy Secretary's annual report of 1898, Secretary John D. Long states how the process of calling up the militias was not a strait forward endeavor.

> In the absence of authority for calling these men into service, the governors of these States patriotically granted them leaves of absence or permitted them to resign from the State organizations in order to enlist in the Navy. During the war about 4,000 officers and men were added to the enlisted force of the Navy in this manner, and were assigned to duty in the Auxiliary Naval Force, the Coast Signal Service, and especially on board of cruising ships, some of which, for instance the *Yankee*, *Dixie*, *Prairie, and Yosemite*, were entirely officered and manned by them with the exception of the commanding, executive, and navigating officers.
>
> The organizations were largely recruited outside of the seafaring class, and lacked the experience in gunnery, navigation, and the habits of the sea which are essential to immediate efficient service in the Navy. On the other hand, they were men of high standard of education and intelligence, and rapidly acquired while on shipboard the knowledge necessary for their efficiency. Considering their lack of experience, the services rendered by them were so valuable that the country has been amply repaid for the money expended in their instruction and training.[5]

The militias were put into action after much debate on how to call them up. As stated in the quote, most had to be released from state service before they could be brought into the navy. All of the officers except for those that had been retired had to undergo an

examination board to prove their ability before being accepted into service, a practice that would not be necessary had there been a true reserve.

Further difficulties the Navy had to face with the call up of the Naval Militias dealt with the authority of the President to actually activate the militias. James Rankin Young, a US Congressman illustrates this in his 1898 book on the war:

> Certain questions arose regarding the right of the President to call out the National Guard of the several States for services outside their respective communities. Briefly summarized, these queries are as follows: 1. If the President should call out the militia of one State for duty in another, would it be necessary to muster them into the general service by any oath other than that administered to the men as militiamen in their own state? 2. Does the President have to issue the cal through the Governor of the State? 3. Has the President the power to designate certain organizations in his call, or must he limit himself to a mere requisition for so many men?[6]

These questions had already been answered during the early days of the Civil War but since they centered on the naval forces the situation seemed new and the ground had to be covered again. Acts of Congress in 1795 and 1862 clearly gave the President the power he required when calling state militias for service in defense of the country.[7]

Once the state naval militias were called up the Navy had to incorporate them into the active force and make them useful to the overall war effort. The overall effectiveness of the naval militia was generally positive, as seen in the Secretary of the Navy's report following the war. H. W. Wilson in his book on the Spanish-American War published in 1900 gave a clear indication of how the militia forces were distributed into the active force. Not only were they used as they were intended by the states for harbor defense but to augment the crews for several of the Navy's cruisers.

> When called out, the Naval Militia was employed for the following purposes: -
>
> (1) Signal service ashore, where their work was "most satisfactorily" performed, to quote the words of the Official Reports.

> (2) The manning of harbour defence [sic] vessels, such as old single-turret monitors, and armed tugs employed in harbour [sic] service and patrolling mine fields. . . .
>
> (3) Four of the oldest organizations were called upon to furnish complete crews for the cruisers Yankee, Yosemite, Prairie, and Dixie. . . . The Yankee was at sea only eleven days after her crew had been mustered into the Navy.[8]

The crews that served on the cruisers proved to be extremely effective at their positions but lacked all the training necessary to make them a fully functioning unit. Wilson went on to elaborate the nature of what was missing in the militia's training and makes a call for a national naval reserve.

> Yet from the vary nature of things they could not be expected to fill the place or to do the work of the trained seaman. At best they were a makeshift, and the necessity of a national naval reserve to supplement the active force is one of the first lessons of the war.[9]

In the official reports that followed the war the Navy Secretary, the head of the Bureau of Navigation, and the officer in charge of Naval Militia programs all spoke out about the need for a national reserve force that could train to a standard not achievable with the naval militias.

The debate over the status of naval militias and naval reserve took a more prominent role in the next few years. The past belief that the merchant marine service would be the most ready source of manpower for the navy was proven false by the war. RADM Stephen B. Luce, in a 1904 letter to the Chairman of the Mercantile Marine Commission saw that service could not meet the needs of a wartime navy.

> "The war with Spain," says Mr. Winthrop L. Marvin, in *The American Merchant Marine*, "proved that the merchant marine of the United States in 1898 was not sufficient to provide the indispensable naval reserve for even a brief conflict with a third-rate (fourth-rate) power."
>
> This is quite true. What then may we depend upon for naval reserves in the event of another war, when our opponent on the ocean may be something more than a fourth-rate or third-rate power? Indeed, may be one of these very naval powers whose reserves we have, for years past, been aiding to build up?[10]

The issue of the merchant marine would no longer be a method in itself espoused as the manpower pool for the Navy. The merchant marine would need to be enrolled into another organization from which to call them. Luce also points out in his criticism of the merchant marine the fact that the US had actually improved the standing of foreign navy's reserves by using foreign auxiliary cruisers to ship US goods.

The lesson of the Spanish-American War was that in the rapid expansion of the forces required to fight a war several things needed to be in place. First, the mechanics of activating the militias into the Navy needed to be worked out and agreed upon. The nature of the duties that the militias would be assigned should meet their training and that when activated they should be activated as a unit to keep unit cohesion. Second, that the state militias were not sufficient to supply the needs of the wartime navy's manning. They provided only about half of the requirements for the war and the rest were made up of volunteers. Third, the merchant marine could not be relied upon to supply the numbers of officers and men to meet a wartime expansion of the navy. And finally, that a national naval reserve system was required to incorporate those people recently released from active duty into a ready reserve. With that national system the navy would also be able to have direct control over training and organizing the units to better meet the requirements of the service. The militias followed the states rules and consistently only mustered about half their strength for training.[11] The war resulted in the Navy stepping up their push for reforms to the militia system as well the formation of a national naval reserve.

Postwar Drive for a National Naval Reserve

The US Navy realized the requirement for manning the ships in both peace and war required an expansion of both the active force and the reserve force. Secretary Long

in his reports of 1899 and 1900 pushed for a resolution to establish a National Naval Reserve. In supporting the need for a national reserve he stated that the naval reserve would fall under direct control of the Navy Department as opposed to the State Militias, which were governed by each of the states individually without strict adherence to standardized training practices. A naval reserve administered by the department could enforce standards and seek personnel of the required skill level and ultimately send them to the ships that could best be served by their skills.[12] Theodore Roosevelt, while praising the state militias for their part in the war with Spain, saw their limit when trying to augment the Navy itself.[13]

The aftermath of the Spanish-American War found the US in a new position on the world scene. The acquisition of territories in the Caribbean and Western Pacific caused the nation to reevaluate its national strategy. The actions the US needed to take, led the country to follow the doctrines espoused by the Mahanian texts, specifically maintaining sea lanes of communication, creating a fleet able to challenge other maritime powers in confrontation, and maintaining bases throughout the world from which to operate the fleet. Sea lines of communication became critical to the protection of the new territories, which required an increased emphasis on the buildup of the navy. The expansion of US trade and the build-up of naval forces lead to a realization that support bases would be required around the world. With the increase in power of the Navy and its evolving global status, the European and Japanese powers would need to be able to control the sea lines of communication or risk challenge to their established authority. This thought process was key to the development an arms race and placed the US at odds with foreign interests around the world. While US naval strategy changed under the

influence of Alfred T. Mahan and Stephen B. Luce, the imperialistic presidency of Theodore Roosevelt led the country beyond Manifest Destiny as outlined in the writings of Fredrick Jackson Turner.[14] These idealists created the conditions in which the Navy became a sea control force versus one of coastal defense.

The Navy Department continued to seek legislation for the establishment of a naval reserve over the next decade. Starting in 1901, larger portions of the Navy Secretary's reports were dedicated to naval militia and reserve.[15] Not only did the Secretary renew his call for a national naval reserve but also included a new appendix to his report dedicated to the operations of the naval militia. While the report stated a continuing need for the states' naval militia, it also pointed out the difficulties with providing the resources and training for the militias and decline in interest on the part of the states.[16]

The Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Frank W. Hackett, in his report to the Secretary emphasized the need for a separate naval reserve system. He repeated the necessity to have a reserve force owing nothing to the state lines to be administered directly by the Navy Department on a regional basis. It would give the Navy instant access to able and trained men at the onset of war. Hackett states in his report "Naval Militia defends the inner coast line. The naval reserve becomes a part of the Navy itself. The men of the reserve will be taken on shipboard, not as an organization, but as trained sailors sent to this ship or that ship as they shall be wanted."[17] These arguments for a naval reserve continued to receive less than enthusiastic support from Congress and only moderate changes to the militia bills were acted upon with little effect to their administration.

The Dick Act of 1902 was a key piece of legislation that helped to federalize the Militias. This legislation addressed those questions on the power of the President to call into federal service the various state militias. Most of the questions of authority had been answered during earlier wars but this act spelled out the in detail the policies for federalizing the state militias. There were still those that believed the Constitution forbade the state militia from fighting in foreign wars, however, in 1908, the Act was amended to make clear that the militias could be used both in and outside US territories.[18]

Since the Dick Act did not specifically mention the naval militia, those members would be subject to the rules of the land militia. A separate bill to address the naval militia was put before congress each year following 1902 supported by both the Navy Department and the Naval Militia Association with little effect. Legislation specific for the naval militia would not pass until 1914.[19]

Naval Expansion

The Roosevelt administration embarked on a large naval expansion program under the leadership of the new Navy Secretary William H. Moody. Moody claimed in his first report in 1902 that the fleet was totally "inadequate" given the nature of the duties the Navy had supporting the overseas possessions and the push for a canal in Panama. While he did little more than continue the call for a naval reserve, he pushed forward the requirements for an expanded navy following the accepted Mahanian definition of sea power. His push for a larger navy would lead to a program that would make the Navy second only to the Navy of Great Britain.[20]

In 1905, with the retirement of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Charles Darling, the position was redefined to allow more supervision of the administration and discipline within the department. Along those lines the Assistant Secretary would be able to more closely observe and make recommendations on improvements to the naval militia.[21] Navy Secretary Charles Bonaparte again stepped up the call for a naval reserve separate from the militias. Citing the organizations of other countries he renders the opinion that the US efforts to establish and maintain a reserve as inadequate. In Bonaparte's view a reserve should consist of:

> every able-bodied man of good moral character, within certain limits of age, who has served at least four years in the Navy and been discharged with credit, to be enrolled on a reserve list, in return for which he should receive from $15 to $20 per month, according to his rating at the time of leaving the service. Enlistments in the reserve should be for four years and consecutive reenlistment should not be permitted, unless under very exceptional circumstances.[22]

This view advocated the recommendation of Captain Mahan's long-service system of reserves where recent retirees and members leaving service, who maintained the skills as seamen gained over a lifetime of service, could be called up rapidly. Once again the pleas for a national naval reserve system met an ambivalent Congress.

Prospect of War Provides the Final Impetus

The Navy Department in the years leading up to World War I continued to stress the need for a national naval reserve. Their call continued to go unheeded. State militias did not meet the Navy's need, as they could not be controlled except through the state. The expanding nature of the navy increased the need for a reserve. Not only were line officers and enlisted men of various rates needed in the reserve but a growing need for surgeons was recognized.[23] The Navy's active strength by 1913 was over 51,000 men. At

least double that number would be required to activate the “fighting ships” that were held in the ready reserve fleet. The militias at their strongest could only muster little more than 7,000 officers and men. The Navy Department’s arguments were repeated almost verbatim between 1900 and 1915 with very little response from Congress.

A strong proponent of the naval reserve was found in Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt who in the 1914 naval appropriations hearing took a strong stand for the establishment of a separate naval reserve. Taking a more positive stance than his boss, Secretary Josephus Daniels, Roosevelt thought that the bulk of the naval reserve would come not from the merchant marine but from the rural communities. While favoring a naval militia as well as a reserve he clearly held some reservations on the abilities of the naval militiamen.[24]

The first change in the Navy Secretary’s report was in 1915 when the organization of a naval reserve flying corps is mentioned. The naval militias had already authorized aeronautic sections and had been provided aircraft through the Aero Club of America.[25] This was a new step in soliciting establishment of a reserve. With the addition of a new branch there would be an increased need for trained pilots causing another avenue for lobbying Congress.

War was looming in the distance and all the European nations were locked in a deadly struggle. The President and Congress recognized the implications of being drawn into the European conflict and had the time to take action to put the US military on the path to wartime footing. After the passing of the Naval Militia Act in 1914, Congress addressed the naval reserve in 1915 by passing an Act establishing authority for a US Naval Reserve consisting of US citizens honorably discharged after not less than one

four-year term.[26] This act had the impact of not only allowing for a reserve created out of those leaving active service but had the effect of retaining personnel in the service longer.[27]

The Navy took the lessons learned from operating the militia and the naval reserve under the newly approved laws and provided recommendations for change that would eventually be incorporated into the appropriations act passed in 1916 that fully established the naval reserve.

> The naval appropriation act for the fiscal year 1917, approved August 29, 1916, stands out beyond all precedent in the entire history of the United States Navy. For the first time the policy of a continuing program for new construction was adopted by a Congress that will go into history as understanding and providing for the Navy better than any of its predecessors. . . .
>
> Our naval legislation in the past has often been criticized as lopsided and unbalanced – material provisions being unaccompanied by the necessary personnel provision. This criticism does not apply to the legislation this year. . . . The act authorizes an enlisted force of 74,700 men, and further authorizes the President to increase this number to 87,000 in time of emergency. In addition to this permanent force, provision is made for the first time for an adequate naval reserve force, which may be utilized in time of national need.[28]

Now that the Naval Reserve was established it became necessary to organize and man it. Over the next year enlistments were high with the declaration of war. The navy was able to accept into service almost 50,000 reservists in 1917 with the size growing faster than planned due to the patriotic fervor associated with the war efforts. In the next two years the Navy Department would ask Congress to make adjustments to the nature of the Naval Reserve but now that it was part of the law of the land changes could be brought about with less difficulty than had its establishment.

Chapter Conclusion

The Navy's expansion in the early 1900s was paralleled with a call for reorganization of its departments and bureaus. The antiquated way the Navy Department was organized gave little support to the secretary in controlling the fleet. The Navy Secretaries under Theodore Roosevelt not only pushed for an expansion of the fleet but for a general reorganization of the Navy's administration calling for establishment of a general board using as a model the Army's general staff. Even with the support of the President, Congress would not move on the reorganization of the department in part because of a fear that the civilian secretary would become nothing more than a figurehead for the naval officers making up the general board.[29] The resolutions and acts dealing with the nature of the Navy's administration found very little support in Congress even with the backing of the president, it is no wonder that the Naval Reserve issue would suffer a similar fate.

In the period between the Spanish-American War and World War I, the Navy experienced continued growth. Congress recognized that the Navy was the best means fulfill its obligations to protect the country's additional territories. The Navy Department was given increased budgets that improved its capabilities. It was in this period that the Navy became the second most powerful maritime power in the world. It was clear to Congress that they could no longer allow the Navy to remain a third rate power. That led to the realization that maintenance of a fleet in being was costly and that to reduce operating expenses most of the ships needed to be made part of the ready reserve force. It was just a matter of the continued evolution of the Navy Department's administration that would lead to the creation of the Naval Reserve.

[1]Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea: The History and Strategy of Maritime Empires* (New York, NY; William Marrow and Company, Inc., 1974), 418.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 15 November 1898), 1.

[4]Ibid., 23.

[5]Ibid., 19.

[6]James Rankin Young, *Our Naval War with Spain Including Battles on Sea and Land* (New York, NY; National Publishing Company, 1898), 125.

[7]Ibid., 126.

[8]H. W. Wilson, *The Downfall of Spain, Naval History of the Spanish-American War* (Boston, MA; Little, Brown, and Company, 1900), 71-72.

[9]Ibid., 74.

[10]Albert Gleaves, RADM, USN, *Life and Letters of Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, US Navy* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), 259.

[11]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 22 November 1899), 34.

[12]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 17 November 1900), 19.

[13]Watters, *U. S. Naval Reserve: The First 75 Years*, 55.

[14]Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (Holt, Rinehart, and Wilson, 1947; reprint, Tucson, AZ; The University of Arizona Press. 1992), 1-38.

[15]Starting in 1901 the Secretary of the Navy's annual reports contained sections dedicated to the naval reserve issues.

[16]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 9 November 1901), 78.

[17]Ibid., 78-79.

[18]Wieand, *The History of the Development of the United States Naval Reserves 1889 – 1941*, 78 – 79.

[19]Ibid., 96.

[20]Coetta, *American Secretaries of the Navy, vol 1, 1775 – 1913,* 462.

[21]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 4 December 1905), 16.

[22]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 28 November 1906), 13.

[23]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 4 December 1909), 882.

[24]Wieand, *The History of the Development of the United States Naval Reserves 1889 – 1941,* 107–108.

[25]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 1 December 1915), 35.

[26]Wieand, *The History of the Development of the United States Naval Reserves 1889 – 1941,* 115.

[27]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 1 December 1915), 38.

[28]Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 1 December 1916), 1–2.

[29]Coetta, *American Secretaries of the Navy, Volume I, 1775 – 1913,* 461-493.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: THE UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE

The US has evolved over the past 230 years into the single most powerful country on earth. It has no rivals in military power. The country did not start with the objective of becoming the single global power; it started with a simple premise provided by George Washington during his farewell address, "That we may avoid connecting ourselves with the Politics of any Nation."[1] He gave this guidance to the nation at the end of his public life and this had been a guiding principle through the first century of US history. It was complementary to the philosophy of the founding fathers who believed in the individual freedom to develop a livelihood unencumbered by restraints of government.

As the US leadership developed a national strategy, supporting maritime strategies were developed. From the time of the American Revolution the national strategy was one that maintained and fostered growth of the inherent wealth of the country. Having just overthrown the yoke of a strong authoritarian government, the political environment would not support a strong centralized government and its associated military organizations. Since the Militia Act of 1792, a land militia was provided for but a federal naval militia was not specifically called for in the nation's defense structure until 1914. While state governments had established naval militias for their individual defense starting in 1888, it was thought that the nation did not require nor need to support a formal naval reserve for the small navy it established. The common understanding was that the Navy would provide protection to the country's maritime industries and in time of war conduct a *Guerre de Course.* The supplemental ships and forces would be provided by privateers able to range the seas praying on foreign

merchantmen at will. The benefit to the US was that little capital was laid out to furnish such a fleet and very little maritime direction had to be given in time of war.

The nation's leadership looked at the sea as a barrier to the rest of the world and would act as protection from the troubles of the old world.[2] Coastal Defenses established at key economic centers and a land militia would be deterrent enough to any practical invader. During this early period of the US there were few in position to challenge this point of view and as the country was focused on internal expansion there was little catalyst to seek a change.

Benjamin Stoddert was one of the first advocates of developing a stronger Navy, but only for defensive purposes. He believed that to have a standing navy (later known as a fleet in being) would raise the cost of invasion of the Americas to such a high level that the expense would be prohibitive for any European nation.[3] Congress did not fund the navy Stoddert advocated, after all the danger was half a world away and a remote possibility at best.

With little support in Congress for a navy there was little use of a reserve, the militia was set up to defend the country on the shoreline and a separate naval militia was not part of the legislators' plan. Thomas Jefferson did not agree and argued that the Navy would be essential to the defense of the nation. He went on to state that an emergency pool of manpower for the naval service would be caught up in the land militia mobilization leaving nothing for the naval services. He took the argument originated by Stoddert and supported a defensive force of gunboats with a naval militia to man them. Jefferson got his gunboats but fell short on the naval militia. In this stage of the nation's history, budgets dictated the nature of the naval force. Those who believed that the Navy

was key to the nation's defense understood the need for a mechanism to muster a naval reserve was required. But without clear threat they could not convince those that controlled the legislature. Part of the problem was that the advocates for a navy could not agree on the type of navy required. The Navy Department wanted ocean-going cruisers of frigate size or larger while Jefferson and Congress advocated coastal and port defense in the form of gunboats.

Congress foresaw no reason to change the methods of raising a navy; it was comfortable to leave the Navy with the traditional methods of gathering crews for its ships. Press gangs, merchant marine volunteers, and privateers all contributed to manning practices of a small standing navy and its the ability to mobilize, at least in theory. In war, privateers conducted unlimited commerce raiding, the Navy would do both defensive and offensive operations, and the US merchants would be at risk from a stronger naval force. There was no consolidated plan on how to conduct a naval war. The US leadership did not desire control of the seas just the free use of it and since they weren't challenging the established naval powers to supremacy of the seas there should be no cause for friction between the countries. With this mind-set the nation's leaders put themselves on the horns of a dilemma; if a large navy was built it would challenge the large maritime powers just by its very being. If they did nothing to develop the navy then they were at the mercy of those same maritime powers. In Congress' mind it was better to maintain the current policies than to engage in costly building programs that could bring them to conflict with the more powerful Europeans.

US naval battles in the early 1800s were ship-on-ship engagements not fleet against fleet and the only reason those came about were because the US vessels were

caught at sea by the adversary's cruisers. The War of 1812 proved the fallacy of using this strategy without a proper standing navy able to repel an invasion force. A weak Navy could not stop the British invasion and resulted in the humiliation of having the nation's capital captured. Yet even this disaster did not convince the nation's leadership to substantially change their maritime policies.

The Navy Department did not have a system in place to formulate a naval strategy. The Department was an administrative organization that did not have a planning function. The Secretary was responsible for those plans but because he was a political appointee he had no practical experience for developing naval plans and tactics. Once in office he had to become expert in strategy with no one in a position to advice on policy; unlike today's Navy Department where the Chief of Naval Operations provides that expertise. The Navy's administrative set up did not provide him with advisors to develop and advocate a comprehensive war plan. The first step in developing a position responsible for the development of war plans was the creation of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1861. Gideon Welles knowing his limitations created that position to put a man with the experience to coordinate naval operations. The Assistant Secretary was put in charge of consolidating war plans and operational strategy for the Secretary. Up until this change there was no one in the department looking at how to conduct a war.

The maritime strategy of the US between its inception (1775) and the start of the US Civil War (1861) remained that of a small nation. It advocated free trade and the expansion of global markets using the maritime merchant shipping. At the same time the strategy was only focused on protecting shipping and sailors from harassment by other nations and pirates. The national leadership did not desire expansion beyond the

continent of North America, which justified Congress providing for only a small navy capability.

A small navy in war could only be effective by attacking the commerce of the foreign adversary. The naval strategy developed from that position did not need to have a centralized approach to war. Privateers could act independently of the Navy and still provide the results desired at little or no cost to the government. The maritime strategy was to impact the commerce of an enemy nation thereby affecting their supply chains, causing the other nation to spend more time, effort, and capital to counter the individual actions of the privateers.

The US saw itself perpetuating that strategy when it did not sign the Declaration of Paris in 1856. The Declaration outlawed privateering and would take away America's primary means (privateering) of fighting a naval war. The Declaration of Paris was an effort by large maritime powers to limit the threat to themselves and their commerce.

The American Civil War changed that mindset within the US leadership. The Union Navy had to become the powerful navy while the Confederate States assumed the role of the weaker navy engaged in commerce raiding. President Lincoln and Secretary Welles realized that to continue supporting privateering practices undermined the claim that the Southern raiders were little more than pirates conducting illegal operations. Welles ushered in the evolution of US naval development from being a small defensive navy to a powerful fleet able to control the seas and impose its will upon other nations. Privateering was no longer a viable way to wage war and with its impracticality that source of maritime power was illuminated for the Navy.

Press gangs while never popular had also fallen out of favor by this time in the nation's development. Since the American culture would not support such an unscrupulous way of generating manpower it too was taken from the Navy as a means of raising manpower. That left only the merchant marine as the Navy's manning source for skilled sailors. Thomas Jefferson's prediction was proved right. The merchant marine sailors were called into the Army by a quota system without regard to their seagoing experience. Without the previously suggested legislation supporting the navy's manning, sailors were sent to the Army. Congress eventually enacted laws to address this problem but it took a major war to enact the legislation even though the issue had been identified sixty-five years earlier.

After the Civil War the country fell back on the small navy theory but the experiences of the men that fought that war started the philosophical change that would lead to a transformation. By 1890, the primary naval strategy became "Command of the Sea." Adversaries were either offensive or defensive depending on the size of their navies and would employ both strategies in varying stages of the conflict.[4] The goal of the fleet was to decisively engage the enemy fleet on the high seas. This alleviated the need for defense once the enemy's fleet was destroyed. The victorious naval power would have complete freedom of movement for both its navy and its maritime commerce. To be able to accomplish this, a navy had to be large in size and able to project power and also have enough power to protect the sea lanes of communications in home waters. Even with this philosophy change there was little movement to provide for a force that could fight as the theorists imagined.

Congress and the country as a whole continued to see the oceans as a barrier rather than a bridge. They continued to believe the threat was so remote that it did not justify the expense of a large fleet. The only fear was that of invasion, which was thought of as a defensive problem. The Navy did not provide the residents of coastal states the level of protection these citizens thought was required for coastal defense. This opened up debates on the type of ships the Navy required. The desire for defense of the coast lead individual states to make the first inroads for a naval reserve force by establishing their own naval militias to protect local harbors and coastal trade. The Navy had to provide the ships and the training for these militias and developed a loose working relationship with each state. The difficulty was that control of the militias rested with the governors of each state and the Navy could not rely on the militia's participation with any consistency.

Several events came together leading up to the Spanish-American War that overcame the reluctance of the county in deciding that a powerful navy was vital to the country. First, was the creation of the Navy War College, which provided a place for naval officers to entertain new ideas and theorize on the naval forces required of the nation. Second, was the establishment of a general board to help the Navy Secretary prepare a naval strategy in general and war plans in particular. Third was the culmination of the drive to fulfill the US's Manifest Destiny that allowed the country to turn to the next frontier. The last was an awakening of the nation to the true nature of the oceans, that of being a highway and not an obstacle. Spurred on by the writings of Alfred T. Mahan, and the drive of Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and later President Theodore Roosevelt, the nation's leadership saw the threat to growing national interest more clearly.

The Spanish-American War ended the US's ability to avoid its position on the global scene. With the inevitability of the war the coastal states raised their fear of a Spanish attack at any of the eastern seaboards port cities. They clamored for harbor defenses that the Navy was not ready to provide. It was this threat from Spain against the east coast of the US that provided the impetus to build a strong navy and employ a reserve in the defense.

The defeat of Spain brought responsibility for territories around the world. To hold and maintain these territories the US had to face the challenges of defending its holdings in distant places. Building the Navy's capabilities and establish bases and coaling stations around the world to care for the fleet became a practical endeavor rather than a philosophical one.

As the US national interests moved the country from isolation to globalism, and because of the nation's increased exportation of finished goods, growth of the country's maritime power was an inevitable outcome. It was a natural development for the country to have an expanding maritime strategy. Since the 1870s, naval officers had been looking at the way other nations developed their navies. A naval reserve was an integral part of every maritime nation and that model was promoted to supply the Navy with the manpower needed to fight the next war.

From the end of the Spanish-American War to the official creation of a naval reserve was only sixteen years. Even though the debates raged off and on from the 1790s, the first real lesson on how a naval reserve would support the Navy was not available to US policy makers until 1900. While examples of naval mobilization were available from the study of foreign navies, it wasn't until the lessons from the Spanish-American War

were examined that the argument for a national naval reserve was seen as practical to the nations lawmakers.

As the Navy tried to implement changes to the Navy Departments structure after 1900 Congress continued its resistance to change. However, the maritime threat was again past and the methods used to win the war were regarded as sufficient for the next war. The advent of war in Europe in 1914, with the implication that US interests would pull America into the fight, gave the Navy Department an urgent security issue in its arguments to Congress. Congress had both motivation and occasion to finally move ahead for the creation of the Naval Reserve.

Nevertheless, the US did not formally establish a naval reserve until 1916 because there was no perceived immediate threat that required a large navy. The Germain U-boat campaign of 1915 changed this attitude. Without the need for a navy why would there be a need for a naval reserve? It was the evolution of the nation from looking within North America to its emergence as a major global trader that led the US on its path to become a naval power. Technology made the world smaller in terms of time and distance, no longer were the European powers and their struggles removed from the concerns of the US The nature of naval warfare changed after the Civil War. US but national policy makers did not recognize the impact of those changes until after the Spanish-American War. It was only when faced with the defense of the US coastlines and the defense of its territories from foreign interests that the National Strategy changed to require a large navy with an accompanying reserve branch.

Relevancy in Today's Environment

A Naval Reserve becomes critical to a navy in time of war as it is a ready force able to augment the capability of the fleet. Throughout the late nineteenth century, most countries, including the US to a smaller extent, maintained the bulk of their combat fleet in the ready or fleet reserve. These ships were maintained with small crews to ensure they could be activated on short notice, usually days once hostilities were deemed eminent. As shown in table D over 60% of the European naval power rested in their ready reserve. This enabled nations to build huge fleets and yet reduce the operating costs by only using them when necessity required. Those nations also maintained a naval reserve of personnel trained annually and standing by to take the reserve fleets to sea.

Today the pace of war has increased. Conflicts are being conducted with a speed that does not allow the nation the time necessary to mobilize for war. Most of today's wars have limited aims and the means to engage the enemies have to be ready without a lengthy call up process to gather the forces. The relevancy of the Navy Reserve can be called into question under such circumstances. How can the reserves meet the challenge when they require time to mobilize?

The Navy Reserve has adapted to this strategic environment by providing the Navy with many of the forces at hand to support fleet operations. The Naval Reserve Air Force is critical to the Navy's organic lift capacity, providing 100% of aircraft for that mission. The Navy Reserve also provides the bulk of forces for Harbor Defense, Mine Undersea Warfare, and are major contributors to the Navy's Construction Battalions as well as the Fleet Hospitals. There are reserve units attached to all major commands

whose sole responsibility is to be ready to augment the active duty component at any time.

The Chief of Naval Operations recognized the need to continue to integrate the reserve components with the active forces and has assigned Commander Fleet Forces Command to lead an effort to maintain and improve the relationship of the reserves to the active duty forces. The results of that effort are being felt around the fleet as realignments are currently underway.

The Naval Reserve while always recognized by naval philosophers as a necessary part of the nation's sea power needed a perceived threat before it was recognized as viable. It required the crisis of impending war before the debate on its usefulness tipped attitudes in its favor. The history of the Navy has always required some critical period to motivate change. Today's period of transformation is no different and the process is slow. Recognition of required changes may be identified but difficult to enact because of outside influences that are beyond the planner's ability to control. These influences may not be directly related to the problems that naval planners are working through but because of competing budget requirements or lack of understanding of the threat those outside influences may impede transformation. It takes a blend of philosophy, technology, and threat to impart the urgency that drives change. Today those pieces are in place yet change continues to move slowly. Shipbuilding programs are delayed, aircraft purchases are cancelled, and numerous additional interests impact the design for the next generation's fleet. Every interest group has a say on the direction development will take. The Navy's leadership must be able to understand these influences and channel them into unified plan that is supportable and realistic.

In final analysis the elements required for the authorization of the Naval Reserve come down to these: the developing national awareness of the US on a global level, the territorial gains of the US during the nineteenth century, expansion of commerce on the high seas, and recognition that the merchant marine was not capable of supporting more than a small percentage of the trade.

Areas for Further Research

To more fully develop the topic additional research must be conducted in the Congressional records. Review of the notes and letters of congressmen during the critical period of debate (1870-1916) is required to get a clear understanding of why the legislature did not act until a crisis was upon the country to establish the Naval Reserve. The arguments in favor of a national naval reserve were convincing but other factors may have influenced the lawmakers and it is in congressional notes that more clarity might be found.

As stated in chapter 1, the limitations encountered in researching this work were the lack of access to Navy Department records held at the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C. and the Congressional Records concerning hearing notes. Had these sources been more readily available in the local area it would have rounded out the discussions on the Naval Reserve. Within the Navy Department sources are likely to be found the notes and letters from people like Assistant Secretary of the Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt as well as the leading naval officers that directly play upon the debate. Congressional records would likely yield the private discussions of the Senators and Congressmen that would indicate more clearly their intentions for a navy and its reserve.

Additional research within the various presidential papers would enrich the discussion on what the real priorities for the administrations were. The Reports of the Secretary of the Navy provide insight to the official position of the government but what were the intentions of the politicians behind the public face they wore.

Additional time needs to be spent reviewing journals and newspapers to gain a broader understanding to the population's support for a navy. While Congress' actions reflect the wishes of the people, newspapers provide a more direct correlation to the thoughts and fears of the nation's population. The New York Times provides a good regional source for part of the county but additional research from other regions will balance the indications across the country.

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[1] George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. 35. ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1945), 56.

[2] Norman Friedman, "Transformation a Century Ago" *Naval History*, vol. 19 (April 2005): 33.

[3] Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (London, England: Longmans, Freen and Co., 1911; reprint, Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 151.

[4] Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. 74.

APPENDIX A

TABLES

Table 1. Status of Union Shipping in 1861

VESSEL	Type	Guns	Location
PAWEE	Screw sloop	8	Washington
CRUSADER	Screw steamer	8	New York
MOHAWK	Screw steamer	5	New York
SUPPLY	Sail / storeship	4	New York
SABINE	Sail / frigate	50	Pensacola
ST LOUIS	Sail / sloop	20	Pensacola
BROOKLYN	Screw / sloop	25	Pensacola
WYANDOTTE	Screw steamer	5	Pensacola
MACEDONIAN	Sail / sloop	22	Vera Cruz
CUMBERLAND**	Sail /sloop	24	Ordinary Layup Norfolk
POCAHONTAS	Screw steamer	5	Ret fm Vera Cruz
POWHATAN	Paddle steamer	11	Ret fm Vera Cruz
RICHMOND	Screw sloop	16	Med squadron
SUSQUEHANNA	Paddle sloop	15	Med squadron
IROQUOIS	Screw sloop	6	Med squadron
CONSTELLATION	Sail sloop	22	Africa squadron
PORTSMOUTH	Sail sloop	22	Africa squadron
MOHICAN	Screw sloop	6	Africa squadron
MYSTIC	Screw steamer	5	Africa squadron
SUMTER	Steamer	5	Africa squadron
SAN JACINTO	Screw sloop	13	Africa squadron
RELIEF	Storeship	2	Africa squadron
CONGRESS	Sail frigate	50	Brazil squadron
SEMINOLE	Steam sloop	5	Brazil squadron
JOHN ADAMS	Sail sloop	18	East Indies
HARTFORD	Screw sloop	25	East Indies
DAKOTA	Screw sloop	6	East Indies
NIAGARA	Steam sloop	12	Ret fm Japan
VESSEL	**Type**	**Guns**	**Location**
SARATOGA	Sail sloop	18	Africa
PULASKI	Screw steamer	1	Brazil
SAGINAW	Paddle steamer	3	East Indies
MICHIGAN*	Paddle steamer	1	Great Lakes
SARANAC	Paddle sloop	9	Pacific squadron
LANCASTER	Screw sloop	25	Pacific squadron
POTOMAC	Sail frigate	50	Ordinary Layup New York
ST LAWRENCE	Sail frigate	50	Ordinary Layup New York
SANTEEE	Sail frigate	50	Ordinary Layup New York
SAVANNAH	Sail sloop	24	Ordinary Layup New York
JAMESTOWN	Sail sloop	22	Ordinary Layup Philadelphia
VINCENNES	Sail sloop	18	Ordinary Layup Boston
MARION	Sail sloop	15	Ordinary Layup Portsmouth
DALE	Sail sloop	15	Ordinary Layup Portsmouth
PREBLE	Sail sloop	10	Ordinary Layup Boston
BAINBRIDGE	Brig	6	Ordinary Layup Boston
PERRY	Brig	9	Ordinary Layup New York
ROANOKE	Steam frigate	46	Ordinary Layup New York
COLORADO	Steam frigate	48	Ordinary Layup Boston
MINNESOTA	Steam frigate	48	Ordinary Layup Boston
WABASH	Steam frigate	48	Ordinary Layup New York
PENSACOLA	Screw sloop	24	Not complete
MISSISSIPPI	Paddle sloop	12	Ordinary Layup Boston
WATER WITCH	Paddle sloop	3	Ordinary Layup Philadelphia

Source: Donald L. Canney, *Lincoln's Navy, The Ships, Men, and Organization, 1861- 65* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 17.

Table 2. Foreign Carrying Trade, 1840-1882	
Year	Per cent
1840	82.9
1845	81.7
1850	72.5
1855	75.6
1860	66.5
1865	27.7
1870	35.6
1875	25.8
1880	17.4
1881	16.0
1882	15.5

Source: Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 29 November 1882), 33.

Table 3. Growth of State Naval Militia, 1891-1896						
State	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896
California	371	376	301	320	313	417
New York	342	401	410	432	387	383
Massachusetts	238	331	589	448	409	439
North Carolina	101	296	262	168	255	162
Rhode Island	54	58	119	113	100	149
Texas	43					
Maryland		124	130	128	174	197
South Carolina		208	204	208	155	165
Pennsylvania			150	217	167	132
Illinois			211	367	199	395
Connecticut				65	71	92
Michigan				73	187	181
New Jersey					216	312
Georgia					52	98
Louisiana						217
Total	1,149	1,794	2,376	2,539	2,695	3,339

Source: Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 3 December 1896), 20.

Table 4. State of European Naval Ships in Reserve, 1895	
Type	% in reserve
Armored:	
Battleships	56
Coastal-defense vessels	96
Cruisers	47
Total Armored	66
Unarmored:	
Cruisers, protected	60
Cruisers	37
Gun vessels	61
Torpedo vessels	65
Total unarmored	52

Note: Total number of vessels in service in Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy (573), the percentage in reserve, by classes is shown.

Source: Secretary of the Navy, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, D.C., 27 November 1895), 35.

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